



JOHN BAILEY

*Elliott and Fry*





JOHN BAILEY  
1864-1931  
LETTERS AND DIARIES





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*Edited by*  
HIS WIFE

*With a prefatory note by*  
PROFESSOR G. M. TREVELYAN, O.M.  
*and a Frontispiece*

JOHN MURRAY  
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I SHOULD like to express my thanks to all those who have helped me with their advice and encouragement—especially Professor Trevelyan; my brother-in-law, Dr. Alington, the present Dean of Durham; the Reverend F. G. Ellerton, to whom I am especially grateful for his kindness in reading the proofs; my daughter Ruth, without whose help I could never have put the book together; and those of my husband's friends who have allowed me to quote from his letters to them, and from their conversations with him.

SARAH BAILEY



## PREFATORY NOTE

JOHN BAILEY, one of the most distinguished literary critics of the first quarter of our century, gave his life up to fitting himself for the critic's task, regarding it less as a profession than as a high calling. He never seriously attempted creative work, but he applied the standards of scholarship which he had learnt at his beloved Oxford to the study of literature, particularly of English literature, and most particularly of English poetry. The value of his work lay in justness and catholicity of taste based on deep knowledge and appreciation of the whole range of English letters, expressed with a force and brilliancy which are too often the weapons of eccentric and narrower views. John Bailey wielded a pen that "made centrality interesting".

He gave his life to the critic's task, rejecting any other walk in life, though once or twice he stood on the verge of politics. He had one secondary occupation, the defence of the vanishing beauty and peace of the English countryside. This rearguard action attracts too few champions among the powerful in this land, and the services that even a private citizen like John Bailey could render were very considerable. He was President of the Scapa Society, and from 1923 till his death was Chairman of the Executive of the National Trust, that is to say the acting head of that body, with which he had been associated from its infancy. The position it enjoys to-day is largely the outcome of wise management in Bailey's time.

Though devoted to the delights of the country, as every lover of English poetry must be, he was also during a great part of the year a Londoner by deliberate choice. He

sought in selected parts of the London society of a generation ago the play of mind with mind on literary and other topics, which seemed to him an essential part of civilized life. He was a man to whom friends meant much and who meant much to his friends. Partly for this reason, his widow has decided to print this memoir, consisting chiefly of passages from his letters and diary. It is true that his letters have not and were not meant to have the literary value of the books and essays to which he devoted his full powers. But in these pages can be found the picture of a dearly-loved and single-minded man of a type always rare and now rare indeed, who devoted his life to the preservation in his fellow countrymen of some sense of the true values of poetic and of natural beauty.

G. M. TREVELYAN

## INTRODUCTION

THE idea of bringing out a selection from the letters written by my husband was suggested to me by several of his friends, who felt that in this way more than in any other a true impression of his character and personality could be presented. The writing of letters to his friends and receiving letters from them were indeed among the great pleasures of his life, and he always felt that to keep in touch with those he cared for by means of correspondence was one of the best ways of carrying out Dr. Johnson's advice to "keep your friendship in constant repair". I have also added some letters addressed to him which seemed to me to be of general interest, and a few from his most frequent correspondent the Rev. F. G. Ellerton (see p. 23), and I have made some extracts from his diaries. He kept a journal at intervals all his life, a *journal intime* to begin with, and later mainly a chronicle of the people he met and a record of their conversation, and I have thought that this would supplement his letters and help to give a picture of his daily life.

A few remarks are necessary first by way of introduction and explanation.

Born in Norwich on January 10, 1864, he was the third son of Elijah Crosier Bailey and his wife, daughter of William Cann of Cavick House, Wymondham, Norfolk. His father was for many years Clerk of the Peace to the City of Norwich, secretary to the Norfolk Agricultural Society, and took as prominent a part in the civic and municipal life of his native town as his profession as head of a large firm of solicitors left him time to do. The other sons were Crosier, now of Cavick House, Wymondham;



Arthur, of Wramplingham Hall, Wymondham, and Leslie, the youngest, who died in 1916.

He was educated at Haileybury, and went on to New College, Oxford. He retained all his life a great veneration for the memory of Bradby, Head Master of Haileybury during his time there, and had only happy memories of his schooldays. But it was Oxford that first completely awoke his intellectual interests; he had an almost passionate devotion to it, and the beauty of the place and its historical and literary associations made a supreme appeal to him from the first. Writing as late as May 1928, when on a visit there, he says in his diary: "To Oxford. Perfection. Strolling in Oxford, looking more like the earthly Paradise than usual—and how the air of it is drenched with emotion to me as well as beauty." At College, too, he made many friends whom he was to retain through life, friends to whom many of the letters in the following pages are addressed. He took a Second Class in Greats, and in December 1887 settled in rooms at the Temple, a part of London which, with its cloistered beauty and academic flavour, was peculiarly congenial to him.

Here he spent nine years, years of steady reading for many hours daily, of much visiting of picture-galleries and exhibitions—he was in a small way a collector of pictures, especially of the Norwich school, and of etchings—and of social intercourse with old and new friends. Among these should be mentioned Mr. John Bond<sup>1</sup> and Mr. and Mrs. Philip Agnew, at whose house he enjoyed much delightful music, and the family of the first Lord Aberdare, one of whose daughters married Mr. Percy Matheson, Fellow and Tutor of New College, both to become John's intimate friends later on. At Duffryn, Lord Aberdare's country place in Wales, he first made the acquaintance of Mr. Bruce Richmond,<sup>2</sup> his close friendship with whom was to play such an important part in his life. He, Mr. Campbell Dodgson—later to become Keeper of the Print Room in the British Museum—and John used to

<sup>1</sup> Of Grange, Wareham, Dorset, eldest son of Mr. and Lady Selina Bond.

<sup>2</sup> Later Sir Bruce Richmond.

dine together weekly and read the Greek and Latin classics, a custom which they kept up until Mr. Richmond's editorship of the *Literary Supplement* of *The Times* made it impossible for him to attend. His place was, however, taken for a time by a new—and later a very intimate—friend, Mr. Ronald Norman,<sup>1</sup> when French literature was substituted for the Greek and Latin classics.

But much of my husband's time was spent, as has been the case with many another young man who has come to London when quite unknown, in knocking at the doors of editors and publishers! He has often described to me how he sent articles on literary subjects to various magazines, even before he settled in London, and what a joyful moment it was when, in February 1888, one on Cowper's Poems was accepted by the editor of *Macmillan's Magazine*, and he saw himself in print for the first time! Gradually, however, he made his way and contributed articles to the *Quarterly Review*, *Macmillan's*, the *Fortnightly Review*, *Temple Bar*, the *Guardian*, and other magazines. Some of these articles were republished in a book which he brought out in 1899, *Studies in Some Famous Letters*, succeeded in the same year by an *Anthology of English Elegies*.

His holidays were spent mainly in Norfolk, at his brother Arthur's house near Wymondham,<sup>2</sup> or with a friend, Canon Cowper Johnson and his wife—a man of peculiar charm of character and personality—in visits to other friends in the country,<sup>3</sup> and in occasional expeditions abroad, on one of which to Egypt in 1898 he first made the acquaintance of my half-brother Arthur Lyttelton, Bishop of Southampton, and his wife.

<sup>1</sup> Ronald Collet Norman, of Moor Place, Much Hadham. Member of L.C.C. 1907–1922, and Chairman 1918–19.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Bailey married in 1896 Helen, daughter of Edward Yorke of Bewerley Hall, Pateley Bridge, Yorks, and they had one child, Anthony, born in 1897.

<sup>3</sup> Among these may be specially mentioned Mr. and Mrs. Napier Miles of Kings Weston, Bristol, and Mr. and Mrs. White of Boulge Hall, Woodbridge, whose house had the special interest for John of having been the early home of Edward Fitzgerald and his family.

In 1897 he moved to a flat, 118 Ashley Gardens, sharing it with a friend, Mr. Walter Crum,<sup>1</sup> a son of Alexander Crum, sometime M.P. for Renfrewshire. Walter had been at Oxford with my husband, and was later to become a specialist in the Coptic language and literature. He is now—1934—producing a Coptic dictionary.

John was called to the Bar in 1892, but never seriously considered the law as a profession. For a long time, however, he hesitated whether to embrace a political or a literary career. The first had many attractions for him, and he was a good and ready speaker. His father had been for many years Conservative agent in Norwich, so that John grew up in a decidedly political atmosphere. He contested Deptford at an L.C.C. election in 1892, and twice attempted to wrest the Sowerby Bridge division of Halifax from the Liberals, standing as a Conservative in a by-election in 1895 and again in the General Election of 1900. But in neither case was he successful—the seat was indeed confessedly not a very hopeful one—although he reduced the Liberal majority considerably on the first occasion; and he gradually became convinced that the real bent of his mind was towards literature. There is no doubt that the decision was wise; he had not sufficiently robust health, nor was he a sufficiently strong or consistent party man for success in political life, whereas his whole love was given to literature and art.

At the time of our marriage, in April 1900, he was private secretary to Mr. George Wyndham, and he retained a great interest in politics all his life, especially in foreign policy and in home politics where they were concerned with constitutional and financial questions. He took a somewhat prominent part in the Free Trade controversies of 1909, being at that time a convinced Free-trader, and spoke and lectured on several occasions on the Unionist Free Trade side. Industrial problems interested him much less. I think that the absence of any historical background

<sup>1</sup> Their joint tenancy lasted for only a short time, as Walter Crum soon afterwards married Ella, daughter of Sir Edward Sieveking, M.D.

to disputes about wages and hours somehow made them unattractive to him, and his sensitive conscience was always harassed by the fear lest his views on industrial problems should be unduly biassed by the Conservatism natural to a Conservative belonging to the so-called "comfortable classes". So much was this the case that his family always declared his only chance of attaining or keeping any peace of mind during a crisis such as that of the great coal strike of 1921, or the General Strike of 1926, was for him to betake himself to the South Kensington Museum and forget all about it in the contemplation of Persian carpets or Chinese porcelain! The study of art was indeed always one of his favourite means of escape from the anxieties of life, and few quotations were more often on his lips than "*Ernst ist das Leben, heiter ist die Kunst*" as we emerged from some gallery or museum into the light of common day.

After our marriage in 1900 we settled down at 20 Eger-ton Gardens, and there our three children were born—three daughters, the two youngest twins, adjourning later to a house in Queen's Gate Gardens, and finally, in 1921, to 4 Onslow Gardens.

The years between our marriage and the outbreak of the War were very happy and very full, bringing him many opportunities for literary and public work and a daily increasing number of friends. From 1902 onwards he became a regular contributor to the *Literary Supplement* of *The Times*, and he contributed two books to the Home University Library; on *Dr. Johnson and His Circle*, and on *Milton*. The one on Dr. Johnson was what really first made his reputation; it was later described by Sir John Squire as "the best short book on the subject extant"; the *Milton* he himself always considered his best piece of work. He also brought out what is now the standard edition of Cowper's Poems, and several volumes of essays, reprints from the *Literary Supplement* and from other publications. He twice, 1907 and 1909, edited the *Quarterly Review* during the temporary absence of Mr.

(later Sir) George Prothero, and was Chairman of the English Association from 1912 to 1915.

During all this time he owed much to the stimulating help and friendship of such men as Sir Sidney Colvin, Sir Henry Hadow, and Mr. Andrew Bradley, and later of Mr. and Mrs. Wilfrid Ward, whom we saw constantly.

Besides his literary work, he was intimately connected with the National Trust, which he joined when it was quite a young and unknown movement, and lived to see expand to its present imposing dimensions. He was Chairman of its Executive Committee from 1923 till his death, and had the greatest possible enthusiasm for all that it stands for in our national life. Another society for "checking the abuses of public advertising", commonly known as Scapa, also owed much to his help and support, as he raised a fund for it in 1911 to meet secretarial and office expenses. He was for some years Chairman of the Fulham Charity Organization Committee and a member of the Administrative Committee of the Society. He always believed that a life spent entirely in the library tends to become out of touch with ordinary human work and interests, and that the work of a writer can only benefit by gaining in breadth and sympathy if he himself keeps up his direct contact with men and things, and looks at life not only through his study windows. But as time went on and life became fuller he often found it difficult to adjust the rival claims of his literary, political and philanthropic activities, a difficulty which must beset every man who is not tied down to a particular profession.

We took our full share of as much of the pleasant pre-war society of those days as came in our way—days which now seem so long ago and so unbelievably free from anxieties and alarms such as are now our daily companions. And the society of his friends gave him great pleasure; he enjoyed conversation, the "tierce and quart of mind with mind", more than anyone I have ever known, and was by no means superior to gossip, whether family or political. He was wont to say that, like Shelley, he liked such

society as was "quiet, wise and good," a description which has never seemed to me exactly applicable to the Shelley circle; but however this may be, it is certain that, having had few opportunities of mixing in general society as a young man, he enjoyed it all the more when it came. In this connexion he specially appreciated his election to the Literary Society in 1908, and to The Club in 1918—he was President of the Literary Society in succession to Sir Sidney Colvin from 1921 until his death in 1931. Both gave him very great pleasure, and in his diary he faithfully records the various interesting people he met and the things he heard at the dinners.

Few people, I think, have had more power of enjoyment. He once told me that he hardly ever woke up in the morning without looking forward to the day, and I believe this was true, in spite of health which was never robust, though for many years it gave us no serious anxiety. The beauty of English scenery, whether of his beloved East Anglian country or of the English Lakes, which had an especial attraction for him; the pleasure of sight-seeing, whether at home or abroad, in which he was absolutely indefatigable, wearing out all the weaker brethren who shared it with him; the unfailing delight which he took in small children, whether his own or other people's; the enjoyment of books, of art, and of society, all meant so much to him that he would have been more able than most men to meet the challenge contained in the old saying that "a man will have to give account on the Day of Judgement of every good thing which he refused to enjoy when he might have done so".

Then came the War. The years 1915 and 1916 brought us private sorrows of our own in the death of one of our twin girls, Rachel, in 1915; that of Anthony Bailey, killed on the Somme in 1916, and of John's brother Leslie in the same year. Anthony was the only child of Arthur Bailey and his wife, and had joined the K.R.R. when he left Eton.

When the War broke out we were at Mount Grace, a house lent to us for the summer by Sir Hugh and Lady

Bell; John at once came up to London to see if he could be of any use either in organizing relief, or in speaking or writing on the Allied side. Although a great admirer of German literature and music and a constant reader of Goethe and Heine, he had never had much love for the Germans, whom he always considered barbarians who had never, he said, gone through the experience of Græco-Roman culture. For the French, on the other hand, he had a great affection, and had, when a young man, spent several months in Paris with a French family, working at the language and literature. The War presented itself to him simply as a contest between right and wrong, between civilization and barbarism, and he never had any doubt either of the rightness of our cause or of its ultimate triumph. He served as a special constable for the first two years of the war, until obliged to give it up for reasons of health; did a certain amount of work in the organization for tracing the missing and wounded by visiting the hospitals here; spoke whenever and wherever he could at various meetings in the country, and finally, in May 1917, joined what was known as the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office, working first under Mr. John Buchan, and then under Mr. Headlam (later Sir James Headlam Morley, C.B.E.). The work of this department consisted in studying the Press of the different European countries and summarizing the information obtained for the benefit of the War Cabinet. France and Spain were the two countries allotted to my husband: he liked the work and did it well.

For the years following the conclusion of peace he came to be known as a lecturer, and was constantly asked to lecture to different audiences on various subjects. He had a good voice and a certain freshness and vigour of style and delivery which made his speaking attractive; he was Warton lecturer to the British Academy in 1919; Taylorian lecturer at Oxford in 1926, his subject being the poet Carducci; lecturer to the University of Bristol in 1927; and from time to time to the Universities of

Durham, Birmingham, Reading, Aberystwyth, and Belfast. He also lectured on several occasions at "refresher" courses to elementary teachers at Oxford and at Cambridge, and continually spoke to meetings of the English Association all up and down the country. His most important piece of work in this line was, however, done as Clark Lecturer at Cambridge in 1921. The first of these lectures, on "Life and Art in English Poetry", was published in a book of essays entitled *The Continuity of Letters* which appeared in 1923. The connexion with Cambridge University which this Lectureship involved gave him great pleasure, and brought him several new friends, more especially Mr. and Mrs. Tilley of King's College. His unsuccessful candidature for the Professorship of Poetry at Oxford in 1923 was of course a disappointment to him, but he never regretted having stood for it, as he felt that to have been nominated for such a post by such men as Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, Mr. Andrew Bradley, Lord Milner, Dean Inge, Mr. Mackail, Bishop Gore, Mr. Julian Huxley, Sir Charles Oman, and many others, was in itself a very great honour.

We sent both our surviving daughters to Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, where the elder took a second class in Honour Mods. and a diploma in Economics, and the second followed John's example by taking a second class in Greats.

No picture of his character would be complete without mentioning not only the delight he took in his children when they were small—infants were to him, as to one of his favourite authors, Bishop Andrewes, "the delight of the world"—but also his interest in their intellectual development. He set himself to train them to appreciate poetry from the first, reading such poems as Macaulay's *Lays*, passages from *The Faerie Queen*, Tennyson's *The Revenge*, and Matthew Arnold's *The Forsaken Merman*, when they were in bed, and was pleased by their ready response to the music and rhythm of verse even before they were able to take in its full meaning; he gave them a love



of good literature which they carried on from those early days into their grown-up lives.

He had always taken an interest in the work of Toynbee Hall, where for some time, when quite a young man, he took a weekly class in literature, and later on did the same at the Working Men's College. One friendship made at Toynbee Hall with Mr. Rockell, a member of the Wholesale Co-operative Society, lasted all through my husband's life. "These working men," he writes in February 1917, after Mr. Rockell had been lunching with him, "put us men of leisure to horrible shame by the amount they manage to read". Nothing indeed filled him with more admiration than the passion for self-education and the love of literature which inspired such men as Alfred Williams, author of *Villages of the White Horse, A Wiltshire Village*, and other works, and William Dowsing, the Sheffield poet, author of *Dream Fantasies and other Poems*, and *Sheffield Vignettes*, to work at the Greek and Latin classics after a hard day spent in manual labour. Alfred Williams began life as a labourer in the G.W.R. works at Swindon, and William Dowsing was all his life engaged in the Ordnance Department at Vickers, Sheffield. With both of these men my husband made friends; he went to see Mr. and Mrs. Dowsing more than once in their home at Sheffield, and Alfred Williams came and spent a day with us at a house we took in Wiltshire in 1926. The most intimate friendship that he made in this way was with Samuel Looker, author of several volumes of poetry, the best known of which is *The Sheltering Tree*, also of various sporting anthologies and other works. He had worked his way up, in spite of great difficulties in the shape of poverty and ill-health, until he was able to find congenial employment as a journalist, author and lecturer, lecturing on English literature for the L.C.C. and the Workers' Educational Association. He is now a publisher's reader. John gave him all the help and encouragement he could, and, as will be seen, kept up a correspondence with him for many years.

In 1926, John wrote a book on Walt Whitman, at the instance of Sir John Squire, for the *English Men of Letters* series, undertaking it with many doubts and fears, which were partly shared by those of his friends who doubted whether an author so steeped in the classical tradition, drawing all his own inspiration from the Greek and Latin authors, from Milton, Wordsworth, Matthew Arnold, would be able to do full justice to Walt Whitman. But the book was by common consent one of the best he ever wrote, as Sir John Squire said in a tribute to my husband's memory in the August 1931 number of the *London Mercury*, in which he described him as "one of the wisest and most catholic critics of our times", a tribute which would have given him very great pleasure.

In 1927 he edited the diaries of my half-sister, Lady Frederick Cavendish, and in 1929 wrote a book on Shakespeare for the "English Heritage" series. This gave him more trouble, I think, than anything he ever wrote; he was so conscious of the greatness of the subject and of his own inadequacy for dealing with it. But it was very well received and has gained for itself a recognized place in Shakespearian criticism. In 1927 he had contributed introductions to the Georgian edition of Jane Austen, and in 1931 these introductions were reprinted in a separate volume, together with some new matter; this book actually appeared after his death. At the end of his life he was twice asked to speak on the wireless, and in March and April 1930 he broadcast six lectures, on Johnson, Boswell, Gibbon, Burke and Fox, and in 1931 gave ten readings from nineteenth-century authors—Carlyle, Ruskin, Newman and others; the last was given on March 8th just before his last illness began.

The letters which follow, and still more the extracts from my husband's diaries which I have given—and many passages which I have not—show how constantly he was preoccupied with religious problems. His upbringing as a child had been on definitely Christian, rather Evangelical, lines and his mother's death when he was only nine

years old produced a very great effect on him; he has often told me how he and his three brothers used to meet every day during her illness and pray that she might recover. These early impressions never completely faded away and left a strain of austerity in his character; he was always rather a Sabbatarian, and regular in his observance both of private and public worship. Habits of personal devotion indeed came naturally to him, and the intellectual claim of Christianity troubled him comparatively little, though he had ceased to hold the unquestioning faith of his childhood. It was, however, the moral claim—at any rate as often presented by preachers and theologians—that he felt so hard to reconcile with the fulness of life as he understood it, with all that it includes of beauty in nature, art, and literature. "Christianity gives the height and depth of life," he says in his commonplace book: "has it yet tried to give life's breadth?" And in another place: "The reconciliation of a true faith both in God and man; . . . is the problem which only life itself, and that partially, can solve." And again: "How can I make a synthesis between religion all-in-all as in the New Testament which holds and convinces me on one side, and art, life, experience, knowledge all-in-all . . . which holds me as much on the other?"

He had moods in which, I think, he would have appreciated the saying: "Shakespeare is, after all, the surest refuge from the saints!" and it was entirely characteristic of him that after finishing Dostoievsky's *Brothers Karamazov* and much anxious meditation on the problems raised by that great and disturbing book he should have reacted in the opposite direction and found rest and refreshment of mind in Gibbon's *Autobiography*!

He had no love for medievalism, or for the monkish or ascetic point of view; his sympathies were always with those who, in Stevenson's words "ply the trade; that wed the maid", and his favourite "Book of Devotion", if it may be called so was, after the Bible, Matthew Arnold's *Notebooks*. These different tendencies of thought pulled

him in different directions all his life, and the difficulties and problems which they involved, both of belief and conduct, were seldom out of his mind for many days together. But he never lost his hold on the spiritual interpretation of life, a hold which strengthened and deepened as the years went on, and more and more came to feel that in Christianity that interpretation is most complete. The Holy Communion was administered to him by Father Talbot, Superior of the Community of the Resurrection, during his last illness, and when the end, which he had faced for many weeks, came, he met it with calmness and courage, and in the belief that he was indeed passing *ex umbris et imaginibus in veritatem*.

He died on St. Peter's Day, June 29th, 1931, and was buried in Wramplingham churchyard, where our little daughter also lies, close to his brother's house where he had spent so many happy days, and with a wide view over the Norfolk country which he loved so well.



1886

THE letters begin in 1886, when John was still at New College, Oxford, reading for his examination in Greats. Frank Ellerton, to whom so many of his letters are addressed, is the Reverend Francis George Ellerton. He came up to Oxford in 1881 as a scholar of Hertford College, and was vicar successively of Warmingham in Cheshire, then of Ellesmere, Salop, and finally of Tardebigge, Bromsgrove. He married Serena, daughter of Colonel Francis Beckford Ward, R.H.A.

The "Tubby" referred to in the first letter is Arthur Hughes. See note on page 25.

*To Reverend F. G. Ellerton*

49, Broad Street  
April 11, 1886

DEAR ELLERTON,

I happened to be in a funny little town called St. Neots in the County of Huntingdon when there arrived at the house of mine host a letter in which, as Thucydides would say, I "heard badly". So you think that I am in danger of becoming a "slipperd man of letters", do you? Your dainty little sarcasm drove me to make three resolves, tho' I don't know that I shall keep any of them. First, to be no longer a man of letters as regards you; second, to write one final epistle defying criticism and proving conclusively that the slipperd man of letters may lead a very admirable and a very useful life (for which *vide* Cowper's *Task*, *passim*); third, to suggest that even if it was my fervent hope that I might spend a good deal of my life in reading

and learning and thinking, I certainly never dreamt of becoming what your severity is pleased to call a *mere* man of letters. I might say a good deal on this subject but as the House of Commons has lately made personal explanations vulgar, I don't think I will. But in sober seriousness I hope you don't look on me as a sort of cultured dilettante, because I am sure no one feels more than I do that we have all got a duty to do in these days. The pity is that we are all too apt to fancy that other people are not doing theirs because they are not doing it in our particular way. You see what I am after: I partly give you a hint for your next sermon and partly take up my parable against you. You believe in the Ten Commandments: I believe also in sweetness and light. Don't call me an idler because I am not now engaged in your department.

I have had another jolly little visit to Tubby since I saw you—and went with him this time to Chester. I always rather lose my temper when I go there. They don't see and won't see that in Tubby they have got a son and brother whom I'm sure they will one day be proud of if they will but stop stifling him in lawyers' offices. There never was a truer case of "a prophet is not without honour". Perhaps you don't believe as much as I do that Tubby is a prophet in his way. I always feel it all most cruelly. I think of him as a sort of literary father. I remember how he read in his holiday hours at school books which men complain bitterly of having to read for examinations up here, and how he first taught me to enjoy real literature as opposed to novels. And now our natural positions are almost getting reversed. He, as keen for reading as ever, is shut up in an office: and I, made keen originally by him, am getting to have read more than he by sheer force of opportunities and circumstances. Do you think anything can be done? I had a good mind to take Tom Hughes to task myself, but suppose I should only have riled him. My only hope and faith is that the intellectual fire in him is too strong to be put out and will assert its claims against all opposition—and fortunately

there is no fear of his being "buried in a career of professional eminence", which, as Huxley says, has been too often the fate of men who might have been something. I don't know whether all this rigmarole will interest you, but I write about it as I think about it, without knowing whether any good can come of it.

The Hughes live now in a funny new aesthetic almost fantastic sort of house—the last house anyone would have fancied Tom Brown living in—all dados and recesses and hangings and pale blues and pale pinks and, as Tubby says, not a single comfortable chair in it. Tom Hughes looked very well, almost too well: very much the muscular Christian and not quite enough of the man of letters to please me. I think I see now why he is no use to Tubby in any of his difficulties. They really have very little in common. He is Thomas Arnold and A.H. is Matthew.

Write and tell me how you get on and what your work is like. Is there no hope of seeing you here for a Sunday?

Yours ever,

J. C. BAILEY

*To Arthur Hughes*<sup>1</sup>

45, Broad Street,

Oxford

November 28, 1886

I am just back from a meeting of the Oxford Layman's League, and a speech, or rather an address, from your father . . . I can't say how he delighted me and indeed I think most people. He was applauded long and loud on standing up, and appreciated, I hope, the heartiness of his reception. He gave us a splendid lecture on Church and State, full of argument and thought and so unlike the mixture of commonplace and claptrap you so often get at these meetings. I was delighted, as I could have said to

<sup>1</sup> Son of Thomas Hughes, the author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. Arthur Hughes was at Haileybury and at Oxford with my husband and the most intimate of his early friends. He showed exceptional originality and ability as a boy, but had to leave Oriel on account of a breakdown in health, and his brilliant early promise was not fulfilled. He ultimately settled at Beccles, in Suffolk, and died there in 1921.



every word: "Them's my sentiments!" But there was, I suspect, a certain amount of ecclesiastical and Anglo-Catholic indignation when, in answer to an objection that Establishment made the Church Latitudinarian, he coolly said: "The more the better, I say!" And High Church eyes must have opened very wide when he suggested that the churches should be used for Nonconformist as well as Church worship. . . .

Since I wrote I have been to London. One day I went to the *Mikado*. I enjoyed it immensely, far more than I expected. What a strange play it is, and what a strange man Gilbert must be. "It is but a world of sorrow—sadness set to song," seems like a genuine expression of feeling; but it is funny to find it amongst all that never-failing drollery which seems so persistently to look on the other side of things. A play like that, too, always sets me thinking when I am alone. I do so wonder who and what the actors and actresses are (it is like the prisoner in the dock). But don't *you* wonder too? The fun and laughter look so spontaneous, but what do they think of it all, and does the one line "sadness set to song" contain a truer account of their world than all the rest of the play put together?

To Arthur Hughes

45, Broad Street,  
Oxford

December 12, 1886

I had such a strange evening yesterday that I must write you a line to tell you of it. It was the night for the dinner of the Shakespeare Society and we dined pleasantly at 7.30 and drank and laughed and specchified with the usual number of poor jokes afterwards. Then we adjourned as usual to a room for songs and recitations, etc. You know what a festive Oxford evening is like. I thoroughly enjoyed myself and began to feel I was not so old a stager as to be quite on the shelf as yet. . . . Suddenly a shout was raised: "Queen's on fire!" And we rushed to the

window and there it was. A glorious night with a moon nearly full and a fresh wind driving light white clouds across the sky, and beneath it all a roaring blaze pouring out of the windows of a part of Queen's. Of course we thought, as people always do on such occasions, that we were the discoverers and rushed out to give information which we did eagerly for a while till we found everyone knew.

There was nothing for it but to go to the High and mingle with the crowd. It was a splendid sight . . . I have seldom seen a better . . . The firemen were there doing wonders as usual, but also as usual at the beginning of a fire with apparently no effect. Still, the sight of them made one feel a horrid coward: I could not conceive myself, I am afraid, under any circumstances, climbing about smouldering beams in an atmosphere consisting literally of smoke and only smoke. The crowd outside was curious: I hardly ever enjoyed a crowd before: there were all sorts there, "classes and masses", dons and undergrads. They were all as happy and good-humoured as English crowds proverbially are. You could not help being struck by the number of jokes and laughs you heard as you moved about. It was a motley crowd, too: dons in cap and gown; men fresh from wines in college blazers, women with handkerchiefs just thrown over their heads, and, though it was very muddy, there were a good many dress suits and dainty pumps. Most people abused the bad arrangements in Oxford in case of fire; some asked if they could be of any help; and I heard a man in a blazer who was very drunk and supported by two friends complaining about the injury to the "façade of the High", which phrase he repeated many times. For a time it looked as if it might spread. Happily the wind was against it and blew it in showers of sparks on to the street. Still, it gained ground at first, and sheets of flame leaped through the windows and roof. I don't know if you have a good picture of Queen's in your mind's eye. Do you remember there are three large figures surmounting each of the

wings? Well, those on this wing (I find they represent Jupiter and Astronomy and Mathematics) made for a while the grandest part of the sight. The brilliant light of the fire was on them, making them wonderfully bright and clear; the flames hissed round them in the wind and seemed as if they must drag them down, but there they stood, looking down on the scene, strangely white and calm and motionless, in the midst of firemen shouting above and crowds applauding below with heavy creaking and cracking about them, and wild clouds of fire and smoke surrounding and half covering them. They got it under after a while and we came home. I felt a new feeling as to fire; raked out my grate, and was not happy till the last spark had died away from the match that lighted my candle. Instead of dreaming, as I had expected, of songs and speeches and champagne and recitations, fire-escapes and hoses and helmets turned up, whatever came into my head. The new layer of ideas had buried the Shakespeare dinner deep. It was all funny, especially as now daylight examination shows the fire was not so great and only about six sets of rooms are burnt. The damages are variously estimated from £3,000 to £10,000; one don who had a grand collection of eastern rarities and treasures has lost them all!<sup>1</sup>

*From the Diary*

January 6, 1886. Margoliouth<sup>2</sup> came and asked me to go for a walk and we plodded through deep snow right up on to Shotover. We hardly stopped talking for a moment, and every manner of subject came up. . . . Two things I must put down. In a rambling discussion on poetry M. said that it was a sure proof of weakness in any writer that he had written nothing but short pieces. Another general rule he laid down was that the poems which show labour and thought are greater than the spon-

<sup>1</sup> It may be recorded here that in Oxford the fire was said to have originated in the Bursar's Office, where he was "cooking the accounts". S.K.B.

<sup>2</sup> D. S. Margoliouth, Fellow of New College. Later Laudian Professor of Arabic in the University of Oxford.

taneous ones. Virgil is far greater than Homer, in his opinion: Tennyson is the first of all poets. I disputed all this a good deal: what of Gray by the first canon? What of Shakespeare by the second? And is it impossible for a sonneteer to be a great poet? Does not 'Milton, thou should'st be living at this hour' and 'Tax not the royal saint' alone make Wordsworth a poet of the first rank?

March 4, OXFORD. (After hearing Jowett preach.)

I wish I could reproduce anything like his simple, straightforward, and yet elevated language. It was the language of the Introduction to Plato and Aristotle. Unfortunately impossible to remember. But though I can't remember the words, I shall never forget the picture of the crowded chapel, dishevelled Balliol men and higher-education ladies, and the queer little old man making his way up to the pulpit with great difficulty and then reasoning of righteousness and truth, wherever seen, with his still small voice rising and falling for three-quarters of an hour.

August 19. NUREMBERG. (Where he was staying with Arthur Hughes).

Goodbye to Nürnberg. I hardly ever have liked a place more. Everything went well there: we made friends with the fruit-women as usual and had very amusing talks. The fruit-market was a pretty sight; the red fruit and the red caps of the women and the red roofs of the houses looked very bright and gay. We wondered if they were all in one business, seeing the uniform costume, and Hughes asked if it was a *verein der fruchtbaren Frauen*—an innocent question which, however, made us roar with laughter after thinking a minute.

November 3. OXFORD. I went off to the Gallery and there revelled till lunch in the Michael Angelo drawings. It is a quite indescribable joy; you don't know really what it is; you only know that as you stand and look your heart comes into your mouth and you feel like St. Paul as if you were caught up into heaven and saw unspeakable things.

*From the Diary*

April 5. OXFORD. Yesterday and to-day I have been nearly entirely employed in reading through Gibbon's *Autobiography*, which has fascinated me intensely. I know no book which has so stimulated me or stirred up so much mental keenness and vigour since Pattison's *Memoirs* and Casaubon's life; or again, the life of Macaulay. Gibbon's circumstances, too, are so like my own: neither rich nor poor; the ideal condition for a man of letters. Shall I ever have the courage to follow his example and refuse to spend precious time on the law or any other profession? There is always the horrid doubt whether I am really suited for or have the capacity for a literary life. Keen as I am, I am utterly without Gibbon's taste for going into and mastering the dry details of antiquity, yet I can be thorough enough and work hard enough when I like . . . but I am neither a scholar nor an antiquary and a man of letters should, like Gibbon, be both.

April 15. Hughes and I got back yesterday after a week at Hereford and on the Wye. . . . The Wye is charmingly beautiful and gave up many happy times: the weather was mostly fine and consequently A.H. was in a high enthusiastic condition requiring control in all matters of business and arrangement which I had to settle. If ever I write a volume recounting our travels at home and abroad, the title will be *Travels of Prose and Poetry*.

September 18. OXFORD. I went to the Cathedral and enjoyed immensely a last service there. It was always associated for me with quiet Sundays in the Vac. alone, for

I never go there in term: and so I think it always makes me pensive. The actual service could not altogether give me peace, fresh as I was from Carlyle. It is "Exodus from Houndsditch" but the building is always so beautiful, a roof to look up and dream into, and grand pillars solemn and stately, and perfect glass . . . And I like the plan of letting you slip silently about on the matted floor after service while the voluntaries are played. Altogether I came home happy and not so melancholy as I might be considering it is my last night in Oxford. However, the end has come. I don't know yet clearly what my Oxford career has done for me. It has been very happy and I think very useful. I came up with no definite bent or any way of life: I leave with a most definite bent towards literary and intellectual work, with perhaps some public work as well if it may be.

To Arthur Hughes

Dresden

April 23

I can't tell you how I felt about Matthew Arnold's death. Your letter was the first word I heard of it, and it shocked and startled me terribly. Just as you say, he was nearer to us, nearer to our hearts and true lives, than any other writer, and I know no one to whom I owe so much.

One is accustomed to say one is shocked when friends and relations die, but how formal it all is generally, even with people we have seen a great deal of! A few months or even weeks and we can't tell ourselves, whatever we may feel forced to tell other people, that we feel anything like a real gap. Hasn't the terribly serious truth of that, *Il n'y a pas d'homme nécessaire*, which dear Matthew Arnold jested so delightfully about in his encounter with the portly jeweller, come dreadfully home to you lately as we get a little older? People have died whose deaths one never thought of, and things go on much the same, other things besides the "old crush at the corner of Fenchurch Street". One can't help humbling one's self-satisfaction sometimes by reflecting how very little difference one's death to-morrow would make to any single human being. But with Matthew Arnold it is all so different. I had never thought of him as old: he had always a manner of perpetual youth in all he wrote, and I had always hoped some day to see him through you perhaps or someone, or even to hear him give some lecture, and one never gave up the hope that with more leisure he

would take to poetry again. And now it is all over so suddenly.

*From the Diary*

February 2. LONDON. The event of the week for me is that the editor of Macmillan's has accepted Cowper<sup>1</sup> which, of course, delights me but also surprises me, as I didn't think it very first rate. However, *dis aliter visum*. No one knows but A.H.

<sup>1</sup> An article on Cowper's Poems.



To Arthur Hughes

2, Tanfield Court,  
Inner Temple  
January 27

BESTER FREUND,

Do you know (I wonder if you feel the same) I always find a difficulty in writing to anyone who is a long way off, or who has written me a long letter, or has any species of claim for a letter? It seems such an undertaking to write under such circumstances, you feel you ought to say a great deal, and that makes you feel you can't say anything.

Your picture of life fascinates me immensely, and I do know how delightful it can be, tho' I don't know how long the delight lasts. I used to live something of the same kind of life at Oxford in the vacations, once or twice quite alone, though only for a few days. I remember well how happy I was. Life seemed so *full*: with such endless possibilities. I think that sort of intensely happy hopefulness comes from a sort of concentration of other energies; you do more than at any other time and all by yourself and so you realize your strength. But I doubt if I am strong enough to bear the tension long, or really whether I have enough in me to keep it going, and my life picture has always been "of the earth earthy" compared with yours. Yours, in its vigorous periods, has always been *absolute*; mine hardly ever more than *relative*; yours to break with all the ties of habit and convention and live the life of the imagination away by yourself where such things cannot enter. Mine has always had a "suffer me first to go

and bury my father " in it. I have wished to live the life we both love but (generally) under the familiar conditions—England, Oxford, London, society, magazine articles, libraries—all the outward machinery of intellectual life which you would do without. You are no doubt right absolutely, but—I don't know—perhaps I am right for myself, *i.e.* relatively. However, I often doubt myself and dread the fussiness and publicity of London and fear lest its insincerity and its mean hopes and fears should creep in over me too.

*To John Bond* <sup>1</sup>

*c/o Frau Korteyarn  
Coblenzer Strasse 85, Bonn  
July 8, 1889*

DEAR J.B.,

So much I write with a fine pen that you may have no excuse for pretending you cannot read the address—if the rest is illegible it will not so much matter.

I think I said I would write a few lines after I had got settled to say how I like it. In any case I will do so if only that I may thereby provoke you to write and tell me whether you have "seen the Shah" and everything else you have been doing.

I expect our life has been very dull and quiet compared with yours in the midst of all the London gaieties. I hope these have forced you into a more optimistic mood than I discovered that Thursday afternoon as we sat in the park. For myself I am afraid I am as little of a pessimist as ever—in fact the last fortnight has gone so very pleasantly that I am only confirmed in my ways. I enjoyed our little stay in Brussels; we had three days there before coming on here, and spent them mainly in the gallery. I think perhaps I was disappointed on the whole, as Baedeker had promised it should be more interesting than the Antwerp collection, which I don't think it is: but still it has some delightful things.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 10.

*From the Diary*

January 10, 1889, LONDON. I have a plan that side by side with my law I will go right through a course of English poetry. I have begun with Chaucer, and think I shall write here my impressions of each. Of course I shall not read everything of a man. Of Chaucer I have simply re-read the *Prologue* and the *Nonne Preestes Tale*. He leaves on me the impression of a charming man of the world, a diplomat who occasionally thought of the realities which lay beneath the surface-things with which he was engaged. He is nearly all objective, and feels and sees the beauty of nature and man wonderfully, but he never strikes the deep note of the really great men. It is hard to make out whether to contemporaries he would have had the strange childlike quaintness he has in our eyes; the kind of unconscious jesting and playful simplicity which is his most striking trait to the modern reader. I can't pretend to grasp his metre, etc., enough to judge his power that way, but certainly, especially in the *Prologue*, he has too many halting lines: I mean that his pauses are nearly always at the end of the line, which makes his poem read like a series of isolated notes, quite unconnected with each other.

January 31, LONDON. At the Grosvenor Gallery this morning before chambers and so intensely happy that I could hardly contain myself. Such exuberant feelings of delight sometimes pass over me in Art Galleries that I realize what the Biblical "shouting for joy" means, and would give anything to be able to relieve myself in that fashion. It made me feel that I could never be a lawyer and that somehow art and letters and an imaginative life of some kind must be *my* life. I will if I can buy a picture every year and gradually form a gallery.

July 6, BONN. Went to a *kneip* which interested me very much. It was probably a much quieter affair than most, being *wissenschaftlich* and a sort of Essay Society. A few speeches introductory, and so on, and then the

Essay, read in French by a Frenchman on French universities. The rest of the evening went in songs and complimentary speeches. . . . The Germans, though certainly kinder and more good-natured I think than the English, are also not only much poorer but far less civilized. They know nothing of the quietness and reserve which belong to civilization, in an Englishman's idea of it at any rate. Their jokes are far louder and noisier, their eating and drinking coarser than ours. . . . They were far more intelligent and cultivated men, kinder-hearted too, probably, and were of as good a character as our members . . . but they are a century behind civilization. It is the difference, or nearly the difference, between Sir J. Reynolds' Dilettante Society and Jan Steen's Debating Society.

August 21. Finished the Laocoon . . . there are few books I should so much like to have written, few books which have taught me so much.

December 4, PARIS. Heard a lecture by Renan on the book of Daniel. What a strange old man! If I had to describe him in a word I should say he was *spirituel* in the French sense of the word and not "spiritual" in ours. He looks like an old Epicurean, very lively and happy and clever, but quite unencumbered with a soul.

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Yaxham, East Dereham,  
Norfolk  
January 23

MY DEAR ELLERTON,

To train oneself in generosity is no doubt part of the perfect life or I should not be replying to you after four days when you took four months to reply to me.

. . . And now to business. I am so glad you have been stirring up the Liverpool people in art matters and hope you will send me the papers of the days in question. I have, of course, no *locus standi* wherefrom to assail Liverpoolians, never but once having been within many miles of their city. And in this case, I could certainly not break any lances for you, for—murder will out—I am no admirer of Holman Hunt, who seems indeed to me to have no great gift but that of absolute sincerity, unless willingness to take pains be a great gift too, which perhaps it is. No doubt sincerity is among the greatest of all, but after all a painter is essentially a person who uses colours and therefore must have some sense of colour—which H.H. certainly, and conspicuously, has not. Witness his "Triumph of the Innocents"—the very picture in question—which is dead cold and monotonous to an unbearable degree: or his "Two Gentlemen of Verona", which is glaring and harsh and crude. Then he is too fond—led astray by Ruskin perhaps—of painting with a moral attached—the most difficult and dangerous of all things to do. A picture is nothing, is not art at all, unless it be a thing of beauty in itself—not even if it be crowded

full of meaning and that of the most moral and exemplary character. His "Awakened Sinner," for instance, has a powerful dramatic poem in it, but it ought to have been expressed as a poem not as a picture. Its total want of tone and harmony is enough to kill it as a picture.

Pre-Raphaelitism was most necessary, but only as a passing phase, to correct the vagueness and insincerity of previous art. Those who have learnt its lesson best are those who, like Millais, have passed away from the stage that produced such things as the "Ophelia," and have learnt what tone is without unlearning what truth is.

There, that's rather a long sermon and one you will find many faults or flaws in. But I pin my whole artistic faith—and it is a subject I think more about and take more interest in every year—on the primary rule that no art is good which is not beautiful. The contemplation of beauty teaches its own sufficient lesson. And I say no more but that I see no beauty—and no dignity—in either the Virgin or the Innocents of H.H.'s "Triumph".

As to myself, I am reading away pretty hard at various things and find my time taken up pleasantly, and well I hope, too. I have written nothing but little things, one of which you shall see next month—and freely criticize.

As to that other idea of the House, it likes me well in many ways and I have more than once thought of it, but should I ever be free again? Would not life be lost in slavery to party managers and local wire-pullers, who would instinctively object to me in their constituencies? And then one would be poor—and easy circumstances are some part of freedom after all. But who knows!

When are you coming to London? Let me know.

I return to 2 T.C. on Tuesday.

Yours ever,

J.C.B.

To Arthur Hughes

252, Boulevard St. Germain,  
Paris <sup>1</sup>

February 23

... I envy you Florence, as I have told you before. Paris may be, as I have discovered it is, gay and bright and pleasant to live in, if your literary, artistic, and moral prejudices don't mind being rubbed the wrong way: but Florence is what Paris can never be, an inspiration of all that is best and deepest and happiest in us. ... I want to hear everything you are doing and thinking and dreaming, for at Florence, I grant, the time spent in dreaming is perhaps the best spent of all, though this is advice you have no need of. Here, where no one dreams and where everyone is occupied in the business of money-making or the duller business of pleasure-seeking, I preach dreaming and a quiet enjoyment of life. ... My study of French goes on, but it is good only for the mind, not for the soul, and I think their poetry dreadfully inferior in spirit and depth to that of the Germans.

To John Bond<sup>2</sup>

252, Bd. St. Germain,  
February 1890

MY DEAR JOHN,

Simply one line in great haste to say how *delighted* I am; I congratulate you most heartily and think you are in every way to be envied and admired too, for it is brilliant to have pulled it off in such a very short time.

What I envy you perhaps most of all is the being *settled*. I seem condemned always to be a wanderer not knowing very clearly what I am doing or what I am going to do, and consequently I look with longing eyes on you settled and fixed satisfactorily—and yet not chained to the

<sup>1</sup> This winter John spent several months in Paris, working at French language and literature and living in the house of a delightful old French *savant*, Monsieur Chédieu, and his wife, with whom he made great friends.

<sup>2</sup> Who had just obtained the post of Clerk in the House of Commons.

office oar all your days but enjoying a good half year of freedom.

Yours ever,  
J.C.B.

I like seeing the details and your essay must have been brilliant and the Greek is very good. Go and call upon Blakesley and triumph over him and White.

*To Arthur Hughes*

*Paris*  
*March 17*

. . . . I feel very amicable and quite free from any tendency to advise or sermonise. So don't be alarmed. In fact I think I lean more and more to your theory of life, which I take to be to make it as rich and full as possible, and leave our influence over others to be rather indirect and unconscious than conscious and direct. Still, I believe that for both of us writing would prove fortifying and comforting, and certainly after writing one feels the great joy of *ποίησις* of which Aristotle speaks, the joy of creation, of production, the joy of a mother "that a man is born into the world". It is probably, or indeed certainly, a self-flattery and a vanity to think like that of one's little doings or even of one's hopes or larger doings, but it is a vanity to which one clings, and always will cling, I suppose, as fathers and mothers will always fancy their baby is not like other babies.

*To Arthur Hughes*

*2, Tanfield Court,*  
*Temple*

*April 21*

. . . It was Friday afternoon that I found your letter <sup>1</sup> at the club and pocketed it to read in my own easy chair for a few lazy moments after coming in. When I got here I found other letters for myself, one from Courtney asking

<sup>1</sup> Saying that Hughes had an offer of work as secretary to Mr. Auberon Herbert.



me to look over some papers for him for *Murray's Magazine*, of which he is now editor, and adding that he would like an article from me sometimes. Strange that this should come with your letter and that we should both get offers which may lead to great steps forward towards settled and regular existence, on the same day, too, of a nature which leaves us free. We ought, I think, to congratulate ourselves most heartily. The two together, yours and mine—yours more than mine as being the more certain—set me dancing round the table with delight as I have not done since the first step was got over by Cowper being accepted for Macmillan.

*To Arthur Hughes*

*New University Club,*

*St. James's Street*

*May 12*

... You don't know how much good my visit to you and the other A.H.<sup>1</sup> did me. I was getting caught in the nets, as is so easy with the worldly view of things thrown at you every day and all day, but I never see you without getting some inspiration out of it, and I come back braced in healthy confidence that the world's views *can* be actually disregarded in so far as they interfere with a life which at any rate sets before itself a spiritual goal and not a material one.

*To Arthur Hughes*

*New University Club*

*June 30*

... with a hundred vague longings for writing this and writing that, I am often very doubtful of my power to write well at all; reading is so much easier and so much more attractive. . . . However, I have just finished Cowper's Letters which will go to Macmillan, though of course it may very probably be refused, and now this morning I was very happy in an idea of writing a book on *Types of*

<sup>1</sup> Auberon Herbert.

*Culture* which would interest me immensely if I could do it, and every word would be written from my heart. Fancy too the splendid study it would be for me! Could anything do more for me *myself* in life and character than to live for months with the really great types of self-culture. It is easy to write the programme:

Greek culture	—	Plato (or Aristotle)
Roman „	—	Marcus Aurelius
Renaissance „	—	(1) pagan—Leonardo
		(2) religious—Erasmus
Puritan „	—	Milton
Modern „	—	Goethe

Probably, of course, all this is too big for me, but it flits before me as an attractive vision.

*To Arthur Hughes*

*Temple*

*October 10*

. . . We cannot, I know, think too seriously of love or too timidly of marriage: it is after all, of the three great acts, birth, marriage, and death, the central one, and the only one which we are left to do for ourselves, and in that too the ideal thing is, I think, to do as little as may be for ourselves. The marriages made by irresistible fate are the best.

*From the Diary*

February 8, PARIS. *Causé pendant longtemps avec Fisher.<sup>1</sup> Ce n'est pas tout le monde qui cause aussi bien que lui.*

February 25, PARIS. Have been reading a good deal of Joubert to-day. His delicate critical elevated spirit attracts me immensely. Will he take his place some day in my library among the chosen, on the shelf below Marcus Aurelius?

<sup>1</sup> Rt. Hon. Herbert Fisher, later President of the Board of Education (1916-1922), and Warden of New College, Oxford, since 1925.

1891

*To John Bond*

*Hôtel Royal des Étrangers,  
Naples  
April 8, 1891*

DEAR JOHN,

This will only be a few lines, as somehow or other one feels quite incapable of letter-writing out here; but I wanted just to thank you for your letter, which I was very glad to get, and tell you of my movements.

I stayed in Rome till yesterday and am now here for a few days, but shall go back to Rome for a night or so early next week, Monday or Tuesday, and then on to Siena, Florence and homewards. Hôtel d'Angleterre, Rome, will find me for some time, or 34 Temple.

Naples is charmingly fresh and invigorating after Rome: Hughes is, like me, a lover of the sea, and we were both delighted and more than delighted to hear its sound and dimly see its white foam on the rocks on our arrival last night. The place is of course a heaven upon earth, the loveliest situation imaginable, the immense semicircle of the bay dotted everywhere with white villas and the hills crowned with pines. But unhappily man is vile, viler than I have ever seen him. The faces are of a grinning, bestial type which makes me shudder. We have seen nothing but the Sculpture Gallery of the Museum, which is most wonderful and delightful. I can only half see it now and leave much to be seen with you. Talking of sculpture, do you remember the Ludovisi Juno? I did not see it in my first visit, and so was the more happy in seeing it now. It is, I suspect, the grandest expression we have of the

great idea of the divine, not perhaps so perfectly beautiful as the Venus of Milo, but belonging to an altogether higher world. The whole gallery is excellent, and most liberally arranged, with the best catalogue I have found in Rome.

You are back in town now, I suppose. You may like the pony up. Of course she is doing nothing in Norfolk, and you have only to write a line to Arthur and he will send her.

*To Arthur Hughes*

*Hôtel de la Ville,  
Lung' Arno Nuovo,  
Florence  
April 21, 1891*

... the real event of the day for me was my visit to San Marco this afternoon. Can anything be more eloquent than Fra Angelico's wonderful frescoes and the two or three little pictures besides! Their place, too, in the cells of their own monastery helps them so. I lingered till the last minute allowed me, and thought of a thousand things, but above all longed, despairingly, in a way you cannot understand, that I could be a Christian in the same simple childlike way as Fra Angelico. "Except ye be converted and become as little children!" And yet I know I never shall—none of us, I suppose, who have used our minds ever will believe again *quite* as he believed. It is easy to believe that Christ was God—and I learn to feel that more every day, I think—easy to see that the atmosphere of the Gospels is the very atmosphere of truthfulness, easy to recognize that if one admits the supernatural at all, it is absurd to ask it to be the same as the natural, but *hard*, and rather impossible and not even to be wished, I suppose, to find any Church's 39 or 40 Articles giving a complete and satisfactory account of the universe. We shall never enjoy the old certainty and security again, but are out on wide seas for many a long year, I suspect. Still, you

hardly understand, I fancy, how all-important it seems to me—if we are not too unworthy of it—to have Christ still at our helm.

*To Arthur Hughes*

*London*

*June 8*

Did you ever at Newbury meet a poet named Robert Bridges? I have been reading and enjoying his poetry, and am told he lives quietly in a little village near Newbury, given up to reading, to his poetry, and to training the village choir. It sounds a beautiful life, but not everyone could live it.

*From Diary*

January 31, LONDON. Have spent the morning in reading *Tartuffe* and the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* for the fiftieth time, I suppose. Will there ever be anything or anybody like Molière? For good sense, for *netteté* of expression as well as of thought, for subtlety and delicacy of humour? I feel sure, never. Shakespeare appears a barbarian by his side, for all that he is so much the greater man. I think the fact is simply that Molière is unapproached and unapproachable in his particular line of work, which is to flash the clear lightning of his wit and insight on the follies of mankind. Shakespeare knew far more of man's many-sidedness, saw deeper and further, deep enough to produce Hamlet, far enough not to overlook Bottom or Dogberry. Molière could not have drawn Falstaff, far less Othello or Lady Macbeth: but in his own world he stands alone.

1892

To Arthur Hughes

London  
February 4

. . . As I have been foolish enough—or is it wise?—to stand for the London County Council, I am horribly tied here, having to see local bores and busybodies about something or other every day. I never knew before how delightful good books and pictures were; after a few hours with these tedious creatures I find art or poetry an absolute and immediate necessity. By the way, I am standing for Deptford . . . my opponent is Sidney Webb.

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

34, The Temple, E.C.  
March 20, '92

DEAR E.,

How shall I answer you! I have had a horrid feeling now for five weeks or more that I ought to try, or I should never have the face to ask for another such delightful epistle—(gratitude, you see, is as ever the “lively sense of favours to come”—no doubt you will say the quotation is misquoted and I won’t swear to it as I will to any I’ve let go to print).

*O quid solutis est beatius curis!* You have no idea, I do assure you, how glad I am to have done with electioneering. I never knew how much I cared for my books and my freedom to picture-gaze and sight-see till I had to endure for a whole fortnight the tyranny of an electioneering agent! It wasn’t quite all hateful, but it was nearly all. The meetings I enjoyed rather, but the canvassing, and still worse the constant interviews with leading local supporters, who will *not* keep their insufferable and impossible and often highly immoral ideas to themselves! They irritated me at every turn, and the atmosphere they

live in—one of “all’s fair in war”—is not to be breathed without disgust, even if one avoids contamination. However, it’s over: and on the whole I’m extremely glad I didn’t get in. From the time I learnt that it would take up my whole time or very nearly so, my chief difficulty was that I did not wish to win, and yet felt bound to try to do so. Some of the work would have interested me but not most of it. And so it is far best to be free—and if ever I am bitten with any political crazes again it will be Parliament, not the County Council. Adieu for ever to that body, as far as I am concerned.

And now back to books and what you said about my remarks on various of them. First—your list of names culled from my paper amused me, though you have thrown in one or two from your own imagination. But don’t think me so very learned, please! The shame on me with all my leisure and opportunities is that I am so little learned. I don’t at all promise you I know every word or anything like every word of the people I refer to. I only promise that I do really know at first hand something of them, enough, as it seemed to me, to justify me in giving opinions on them. . . .

Then next there’s Milton. You say, against me, that the power of expression is *not* his greatest gift, and that he—or Satan—is dramatic. . . . Now surely it’s true that Milton is great chiefly for his unique and splendid blank verse gift? And not so much for his imagination which has left, I think, a most confused and confusing picture of heaven and hell and their relations, or for his thought-power which gave us his crude and contradictory theology? Eh? That’s what I meant. And as for Satan being dramatic, he is no doubt less undramatic than the rest (and by the way a certain dramatic gift is wanted in an epic as in a novel) but surely *all* the characters talk out of character, so to speak, all through the poem! Does anybody *believe* in any of them? That seems to me the real test. What is Pope’s criticism? “God Almighty” scolding “like a school divine” or something of the sort. I must

say I think it hits the mark. Neither God the Father, nor the Son, nor Satan nor the angels have any kind of *personality* of their own: in the sense that Hamlet or Ajax or Faust or Hector or even Turnus have: they are merely vehicles through which Milton carries on an interminable argument about free will and cognate matters.

And now good-night. I felt when I wrote before that to ask a marrying man to spend a holiday with me was an absurdity, as it certainly is: so I say no more of that. If I come to your part of the world I will ask for a bed: and *do* let me know beforehand if *you* come here. A talk would be delightful, delightfuller even than a letter, which is a luxury I hope you will allow me even though it be the very middle of Lent.

Yours ever affec.,

J. C. BAILEY.

*From the Diary*

January 5, LONDON. Matheson<sup>1</sup> and I dined at N.U.C. We had a delightful evening and some very good talk and all manner of subjects from Italian literature to Oxford gossip. He told me one story that amused me: a man came to a solicitor whom Northcote knows lately and wanted his marriage settlement drawn up. After the ordinary clauses had been arranged, he said to the solicitor: "Now I want this clause added: 'If my wife endeavour in any way to substitute, or persuade me to agree to substitute, tea for dinner on Sundays, this settlement shall be void.'" The solicitor protested that the clause was very unusual and, in his opinion, undesirable. The bridegroom, however, insisted that he would take his settlement somewhere else if the solicitor refused to insert the clause. "For," he added, "it is an important thing to me, and though I don't know that they will try anything of the kind on, I wish to be on the safe side. She comes of a damned tea-ing lot!"

<sup>1</sup> Percy Matheson, Fellow and Tutor of New College, Oxford.



1893

To Arthur Hughes

Hotel Seiler,

Zermatt

August 28, 1893

DEAR A.H.,

I wonder where you are and what you are doing. You see where I am, though I don't think you know the place. You would enjoy it immensely. The air is magnificent and one is right up among the mountains; indeed it is now unpleasantly cold and a great contrast to Chamonix (just below Mont Blanc), where I was last week and where the heat in the valley was intense. *There* one sat still on account of the heat, when one would have liked to have been walking somewhere: *here* when I want to read or write I must walk to keep myself warm. . . . It is a great thing to be back among the mountains, and there are moments when they make one feel one's ordinary life very small. Still, I say it with shame, somehow or other they don't *touch* me or impress me quite in the same way as they did when I was here eight years ago, or when I was with you at Innsbruck (in 1886). Is it that we are already getting older, or has "club life" done the mischief? . . . It is not that I lose appreciation of Nature as a whole, I think: ordinary English country hedges and trees charm me certainly more than they did before I lived in London, but then it is admiration and enjoyment, nothing in the shape of awe, which is what I used to feel among the mountains.

Nothing is great in the eyes of the clubman, I know, but I won't think I have become a clubman, and shall put it down to disuse. Enough about myself. Do let me

hear about you. Where have you been this August and what doing? Are you going on living at Ryde? Is the pupil still with you? There are enough questions to remind you of the man at the Green Bank, Falmouth, who refused to submit to further cross-examination. Do you remember him?

I suppose you have not been taking to any literary labours. I wrote a lot of Goethe, but fear it will come to nothing. To study him is one thing, to write about him another. I cannot "travel over" him and without that I can do nothing.

The *Temple Bar* man is sufficiently pleased with La Fontaine to have written twice asking me to send him other articles on my "favourite authors". Whom shall I honour?

Yours affec.,

J.C.B.

1894

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Wramplingham Lodge,  
Wymondham,  
Norfolk  
November 24, 1894

DEAR FRANK,

. . . I don't think I have much to say about your list, which is a splendid one if the ladies are up to it, as I suppose they are from their having read the *Purgatorio*. Only two things: don't cut out the *Dutch Republic*, which is the most exciting (and I believe the most veracious) piece of history in the world, and has given lots of people the taste for History. And if you love me, make them read Plato in *Jowett*, at the cost of a few extra shillings. Each volume can be bought by itself, I think; and I always consider it the best translation in the world. The others are so inferior: no one can "taste" Plato through them. My theory of a translation is that it should give *everything* of the man and nothing of the Greek, or Roman, or German, or Frenchman. All that is peculiar to the individual should be kept: everything that belongs to his nationality should disappear. And so in *Jowett* nothing Platonic is lost, nothing that is merely Greek remains. It is Plato writing English. Do the ladies know their Milton? If not I would make them read *Comus*. It is so fine and so little read.

Ever affec. yours,  
J. C. BAILEY.

*From the Diary*

February 4, LONDON. Finished the first part of the *Analogy*, with more immense respect than ever for Butler, who combined so wonderfully the two things of most value in the world—the wisdom of the philosopher and the reverent piety of the saint.

February 14, LONDON. Crum<sup>1</sup> tells a story which I think good. He was standing looking at a shop window, two men by him talking, one a parson, young and “muscular”. He heard nothing till, as they turned away, the parson said in a tone of triumph: “Well, the Authorized Version was good enough for St. Paul and it’s good enough for me!”

December 5. LONDON. To-night took up a horrid Socialist book which has made me very uncomfortable. Nothing else ever really depresses me but this hideous doubt which comes now and then, of whether one is justified in living on rents and interest at all? I shall not act on it, no doubt, and indeed I am generally convinced of its unreasonableness, but the awful inequality of our social conditions is enough to give one pause, and certainly is responsible, in my case, for more hours of discomfort and uneasiness than anything else. The solution to all such questions is, I hope, this: that it is better to accept the amazingly rapid improvement that is going on than to plunge into any Socialistic Medea’s cauldron!

December 8. “A typical day”! I sometimes wonder myself and am sure other people do, how my days go—so it will be interesting to put down the exact account of yesterday. Breakfast 9.20. *Times* and letters. Writing at Gibbon (article on), 11.15. 1.20 Lunch, Saintsbury Lyrics. Out 3–5 p.m. Tea with Watson’s new volume of poems. Writing Gibbon till 7.15. Dinner at club. Back here 9 to read Lucretius with Richmond and Dodgson. Then at 11.15 went in to F. Smith and had long talk on marriage. Bed 12.30, an hour later than usual.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 12.

1895

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

2, Tanfield Court,  
Inner Temple  
December 21, 1895

DEAR FRANK,

If the ladies don't mind Greek, why shouldn't they learn? Or, if that suggestion be impertinent or impracticable, why shouldn't they read Milton instead, a far better way, as Mat. A. well said, of getting an idea of what the grand style of the great classics of Greece really was, than any translation can give. Very likely they haven't read M.: but then, I suppose, very likely also, they *won't*, which is a thousand pities, the said J.M. being quite incapable of failing to make his due impression on quite dull people: your humble servant having tried the experiment with such at Toynbee Hall of late, and believing that not only the brighter but the duller caught some glow from his "hallowed fire": and his politeness does not allow him to suppose your ladies are dull in any way: assuming which, he thinks you ought not to let them remain ignorant, if they *are* ignorant, of what is certainly the greatest achievement in the world of pure art that their race has produced.

However, I am unwise—for *your* sake—to let myself begin about Milton. Back to Homer. Butcher and Lang is, I think, the best translation: but prose is always prose and Pope is at least a "pretty poem" as Bentley said, even if, as he also said, "you must not call it Homer".

*From the Diary*

January 9, LONDON. Since I came back I have done nothing serious but read the *Ædipus Coloneus*. How difficult it is! I went very slowly, but not too slowly to realize how glorious most of it is: the wisdom and the noble moral atmosphere of Sophocles are felt almost everywhere in it: and the conclusion is an inspiration; the imagination has never conceived anything grander than the way of *Ædipus*' passing. I shall read it again quickly.

. . . I have read a couple of sermons of Jowett—the two on “Study” and on “Success and Failure” have made me ask myself what is my aim in my studies and what is my place in life. . . . No doubt my aim has always been general culture, not specialism, and this I mean to keep to. . . . My object on the intellectual side has always been to know myself “the best that has been said and thought in the world and to try to bring it home to others.” . . . And so my aim at Toynbee Hall is never to make English scholars—which is impracticable, I think, with people who have so little leisure—but to make them know how to enjoy, and so to use, Shakespeare and Milton and Wordsworth. . . .

*To Percy Matheson* (who was engaged to the Hon. Elizabeth Bruce, daughter of the first Lord Aberdare), after sending him a wedding present:

*New University Club,  
St. James's Street, S.W.  
February 24, 1896*

DEAR MATHESON,

. . . As I told you the other day, I envy you happy men who are only waiting till Easter very much. How much longer are Fisher and I and Francis Smith and Walter Crum to remain forlorn in the wilderness of bachelor-dom? Or has Fisher altogether married the Muse of history?

Yours ever,  
JOHN BAILEY.

*To Rev. F. G. Ellerton*

*118, Ashley Gardens, S.W.  
June 27, 1896*

MY DEAR FRANK,

Oh! Oh! Your letter is dated May 13! and I have just traced June 27 on mine with the slowness of self-conscious remorse! I have been carrying it about with me ever since I got it almost and meaning to say thank you for it. But why will you write such first-rate letters? I have just re-read all the last three. This does not mean you are not to do it again. One can't, in simple decency, acknowledge them in the ordinary rough and tumble way. Indeed, one yearns to be able to be as polite and pretty as people managed to be in the last century. I often envy them and regret my boasted plainness of speech: or at any rate that we cannot just keep a court dress in our literary wardrobes for state occasions or occasions like this, when the prettiest thing one could say would be less than one means. This is sober seriousness: but I mustn't lead you into the temptation of vanity: only *do* make up your mind to find an hour once a month to discourse to me on yourself and myself and other things and people of less importance. Now don't forget: I am sure—tho' you

don't think it—that you have more spare time than I have; and I undertake if you wish for the undertaking to always send a reply of some sort or other. . . .

I meant to have replied to your strictures about Bridges, tho' I'm glad you liked what I said. But you mustn't be so sensitive for your cloth! I never said that parsons couldn't be poets; only a man must have *one* main bent, and Wordsworth's I thought might easily have been the parsonical rather than the poetical.

Here, by the way, are two stories about parsons: one about the highest of them. There was a Medieval Pope—more than one perhaps—whose life was not all that it should have been: and his enemies published a Life of him describing his frailties, one of which was "*uxorem habuit in Bithynia*." The book created a scandal, and the authorities employed a man to produce a corrected and unscandalous edition. His method was the simple one of negating the slanderer, but you will allow that it produced surprising results when the readers of the laudatory life of His Holiness came suddenly upon the statement "*uxorem non habuit in Bithynia*." I have left no room for the other story—it must keep. Indeed, I have two—one about Pio Nono and another about a Dissenting Minister in Dorsetshire. But good-night to you and Mrs. Ellerton and the young lady.<sup>1</sup>

Yrs. affec.,

J.C.B.

From the Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Warmington Rectory,  
Sandbach

December 17, 1896

"Thou com'st much wept for."

Really if you had written before you would have had another monthly letter sooner, for I quite have taken to that rule. And indeed when you are living a literary life

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ellerton's eldest daughter Margaret, who was born in April this year.



in Paris it is a time when the tributary letter might be dropt (not *dropped*). However, as you ingenuously remark, "*Parlons d'autres choses.*" I thank thee Fitz for teaching me that word: I had made note of it for frequent use—at the psychological moment; an art you have mastered shall we say too well?

There, haven't I "conveyed dislike" of your silence rather meekly?

I have not yet thanked you for your gift of Matt. For many years I have desired to possess *Essays in Criticism* and shall be especially glad to connect them with you, for you appreciate M.A. "not only wisely but (also) too well?"—which exactly expresses what I mean! M.A. is a critic but he always appears to my vision (even when he is *most* luminous and *most* piercing sweet) to be passing a white hand through ambrosial locks and to be *odi-ing profanum vulgus* and so forth. "Now just try this. You catch the flavour? It is, in fact, perfection. You fail to detect it? Ah!"—volumes in the "Ah!" I don't mean to do any iconoclasm in saying so, but I confess he is, except now and then, so apt to be *précieux* (isn't that what you say in Lutetia?) that he puts one off. Still he is a *great* critic and an almost great Poet.

I have read Pater's fragment *Gaston de Latour* and would have sent it to you, but that I knew you would have got it at once. How charming his touch is. I shall ever see Chartres now in a wide cornland. Such mental visions are wonderful gifts. I know too little Pater. Tell me what besides *Marius* and the *Renaissance* (how is Monna Lisa by the way?) are best to read. Dear Pater. Never, never, shall I forget my lunch with him and the two fair American girls and their very American Dragon, in his rooms at B.N.C. How he soliloquized of the Campo Santo and the fair flowers planted long ago by dead hands—"and they linger yet"; and how as he looked out of his window he felt that if Dante came to Oxford he *must* have passed under his window. And how the Dragon tried to be intense on the colour and shimmer of a jelly he had

provided for her delectation. And how I explained to the fairer of the girls in the Library that . . . but certainly here *parlons* . . .

And I hear the Prayer Bell.

So with our love and all Christmas wishes, good-night.

Yours affectionately,

FRANK G. ELLERTON.

1897

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Wramplingham Hall <sup>1</sup>

Wymondham,

Norfolk

January 4, 1897

DEAR FRANK,

That long letter, three closely written and most delightful sheets, is still unthanked for! (What a barbarism!) *O excellentissime epistolatorum!* (if one is to write barbarously it may as well be done in Latin) how shall I dare respond to your incomparable pages! I have only one complaint to make of you and that is that not satisfied with writing your own letters (and doing it I freely admit in all perfection) you want to write mine too! Would that you were here to do it! I would gladly stand aside and watch or listen; but as it is you have to do it with my pen which is not so easy: for my pen can after all only transfer to paper what is in my head! For instance "Tell me of Puvis de Chavannes: and you won't, I know," and I can't because there is nothing in my head about him, or next to nothing—I have seen some of his things and never felt sure about them: they seem to me not failures but not successes either. And where's the use of telling you that?—especially as you probably know much more than I.

The clock strikes seven: and my brother dines at 7.30 and is a punctual and particular man. How shall I therefore find means to say a quarter of what I want to say to you (not at all the same thing as what you want to hear!) and yet arrange my shirt and other things pertaining to a proper appearance at dinner before the "*Madame*

<sup>1</sup> His brother Arthur's house in Norfolk.

*est servie*”? (I have brought something back from Paris, you see!) . . .

*To Arthur Hughes*

*London*

*July 25*

. . . If I were not always reading poetry, sometimes seeing Nature, and often art, I should soon take as low a view of life as any small solicitor in the City. Yesterday I had an hour with Edward Calvert. Do you know him? One of the most beautiful, most finely touched artists whose work I know at all. The little one can see is at the British Museum and you come away from him feeling that nothing really matters any more, no fate can touch one while there are such lovely things at one's door, to be had for the asking. He was a friend of Blake's, but had in place of Blake's mysticism a most astonishing combination of the artistic capacities of Greece and Venice.

*To Frederic Kenyon* <sup>1</sup>

*Wramplingham Hall,  
Wymondham,  
Norfolk*

*September 13, 1897*

DEAR KENYON,

I was so glad to get your letter . . .

Now for what you say. It is very good of you to like seeing the things I write as you say you do: and it is a very great pleasure to me when friends like you will look at my productions: one cares more for the approval of friends than of other people, at least of friends of similar tastes to oneself: and I assure you that people who write so little and with such difficulty and hesitation as I do are not the least anxious of their tribe that the little they do produce should be seen by anyone who is at all likely to take any interest in it. And when you are slow and ineffective, encouragement helps enormously to keep you

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Frederic Kenyon, G.B.E., Director of the British Museum 1909-30.

going, and carry you through the many moments in which it seems simplest to indulge the "acquisitive" faculties alone, and give up attempting to say any say of one's own. There is far too much writing done in the world and so far too little good and serious reading, that one often wonders whether it is desirable to make one more of a flock already too numerous: but yet one can't help wishing to write a bit if only to have a chance of preaching good reading—which is what I do in the main—and so the wheel goes round again. Only I hope *very much* that you won't let me *bore* you with my articles which I have a great dread of; and that you won't ever feel *in the least* bound to acknowledge them. . . .

I am as surprised at your view of Pindar as you are at mine and should like to talk it over. Surely I cannot be wrong in thinking that his great characteristic is the way he subordinates everything to style, which was my point. His abruptness of which you speak is that of a mountain peak (has someone said this?) which still has the beauty of fine sculpture. I have just been reading the third *Pythian* which appears to me to bear out exactly what I said. What he *says* is largely composed of commonplaces: nothing brilliant or original: the impression is made by a sort of statuesque beauty in the way in which his imagination grasps the stories of Peleus and Cadmus and Coronis and by "the noble and severe restraint of his manner," as I said. Your phrases rapidity, brilliance, abruptness, suggest to me rather Shakespeare, Browning, Byron in *Don Juan*, etc. I hardly understand them about P. But he is such a very difficult author and sensations of strong admiration are often so difficult to analyse that I may be missing very characteristic points in him. The only rapidity I see is one of free transition from episode to episode, but the treatment of each is as grave and severe as can be; only the main lines as in relief—none of the details as painting gives them.

Yours ever,  
JOHN BAILEY.

*From the Diary*

November 13. LONDON. Have re-read Wordsworth's *Prelude*, which I have just finished with the very greatest interest. I know no record of a mind's history which comes home to me more, and perhaps no one has done more to keep me from worldliness and deadness of the imagination and of the simpler emotions than Wordsworth. I think his philosophy more real and practicable than any complete theory of "how to live" that I know of. I am sure that in our measure we can all practise it. Keep constantly alive to the beauty of the world around you and find in it at once a precept towards a life as calm and beautiful, and a pledge of the permanence and reality of what is highest in you. That is what I make of his teaching.

1898

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Hôtel d'Angleterre, Cairo,

from February 13 to March 3

Luxor Hôtel

February 4, 1898

DEAR FRANK,

I am sitting in the garden of this delightful hotel shaded by palms, and surrounded by roses and the fine red *poinsettia*, which seems to be *the* flower of modern Egypt, and as I am too much in love with the delicious sensation of the ease and calm which belong to the South to be able to make any temple expedition this morning, I will put the gilding of virtue on my luxury by devoting an hour or so to doing my duty to you—not that it isn't a pleasure, too, *Meorum optime epistolatorum*; for I not only enjoy having a talk with you on my own account, (who enjoys saying his own say more than J.C.B.?), but I rejoice greatly in the consciousness that as soon as my letter has been posted, or very soon after, I shall begin to think I have a right to a letter from you and look forward to an enjoyment of my rights. May the next be like the last! Not that they are not all delightful but after all I am very much in love with my own predilections, and there are few pleasures like finding them shared. I *am* so glad you like Herédia and that we are in full agreement for once. I don't know when I have had a greater pleasure of that kind than to find you feel so exactly as I do about him. I think he is the greatest of living poets by a long way, and so few people have heard of him! I was quite delighted to find an old maiden lady on the Nile steamer

asking me if I had heard of him. She had only seen *Les Trophées* lying at the London Library and had *copied out* what she could in her enthusiasm then and there. I lent her my copy which I have with me and she copied others!

However, I am not going to talk of Heredia now—only thank you again very much and very seriously. To any one who accomplishes so very little as I do it is the greatest possible pleasure, the greatest of all pleasures, to know that one has done some work that is of real use; for I do think that to introduce a poet like Heredia to a few people is to render them a real service, and to go a little way towards enabling one to face the critic—in one's neighbours' faces or one's own conscience—who fails to discern any "proper reason for one's existence" . . .

Now for Egypt, too long delayed. You will be surprised, I daresay, to hear that modern Egypt very often seems to me more interesting than ancient. Politician as I am, I doubt if there is any other country of which I could say the same. But here the art is, on the whole, a great disappointment. You taunt me with being all Greek and classical in my sympathies. I never felt it so much as I have here. You do not know till you come here how literally and exactly it is true that beauty is a *discovery* of the Greeks. There is indeed a fine delicacy about a certain number—not many—of the bas reliefs: there is one case in the museum of really exquisite jewellery: and there is in their architecture a decided grasp of the grandiose, the vast, the imposing, which is certainly one element of greatness in architecture. But as far as *beauty*, as far as art in its essential meaning, goes, there is more of it in one of the reliefs from the balcony of the temple of Nike Apteros than in all the acres of wall reliefs here, more of it in one Doric column of the temple of Paestum than in all the various columns, lotus-formed, papyrus-formed, palm-formed, Osiris-formed, from one end of Egypt to the other. I think there is no doubt whatever of this, though of course it is heresy in the eyes of the Egyptologists. . . .



The deplorable thing here is the unspeakable ugliness and dullness of the religion. Greek religion—if not very religious unless under the surface—is such a beautiful thing, so full of lovely associations, grace, charm, poetry, above all humanity. This is partly a thing of mere gloom, the book of the Dead, the journey of the Dead, etc., and partly a brutal thing: gods with rams' heads, bulls' heads, frogs' heads, and other monstrosities, and the reliefs represent sheer cruelty as often as not: so that one has neither the faith, and tenderness, and pure morality of Christianity nor the beauty of the pagan myths. . . .

The Nile-boat existence is very pleasant but for the innate vices, chiefly vulgarity, of the tourists as a whole. But I have made acquaintance with *some* pleasant and nice people, and most of all Horatio Brown who lives at Venice, wrote Symonds's life, and likes all the books I like, so that we could talk for ever. The boat leaves lots of time for reading, and I have done a good deal—Herodotus II with a little disappointment, though he is very shrewd here and there; seven or eight plays of Shakespeare, a lot of Tennyson to complete the impression of the Life, Miss Broughton's *Belinda*, Balzac's *Père Goriot*, and lots of books on Egypt. Do you know and value Coventry Patmore? He is really admirable when he can rise above being old-maidish.

*To Arthur Hughes*

*December 23*

. . . I am more sure than I ever was that the future lies in a new interpretation of Christianity, with more of Plato and Origen in it and less of Aristotle and Augustine, if I may judge by the little I know of those great Fathers!

*From the Diary*

May 3, 1898. LONDON. Finished *Harry Richmond*, with less belief in Meredith than before. He has more of the

poetry of nature and sometimes of man (*e.g.* Richard Feverel in the love scene, cf. that of Evan Harrington) than almost any novelist—than any, perhaps. But I cannot forgive the puppet atmosphere one breathes in his novels. They have absolutely nothing of the inevitableness of great art.

1899

*To Arthur Hughes*

*Wrampingham Hall*

*January 16*

I came here on Saturday last; to-day is a delicious day, the sunlight looking so lovely in the distance through the bare trees; the birds begin to sing; the wind very soft but very strong, so that as I rode this morning it was as if one were being vigorously kissed on the cheeks all the time.

*Post Card to Rev. F. G. Ellerton*

*118, Ashley Gardens, S.W.*

*February 10, 1899*

Landor wished Browning would "atticise" a little. "Few of the Athenians had such a quarry on their property, but they constructed better roads for the conveyance of the material." Was B. ever better criticized in his leading merit and his leading defect? Can a defect lead, by the way?—J.C.B.

*To Hon. Sarah Lyttelton*

*118, Ashley Gardens, S.W.*

*November 1, 1899*

DEAR MISS LYTTELTON,

I am sending the volume of Rashdall's Sermons with this. I shall be very much interested to hear what you think of them if you find time to look at them. I thought the book was the most interesting piece of *theology* I had read for a long time, and it is very consoling to find that some of the most puzzling difficulties in the Christian creed as it

is generally understood are comparatively modern things, the growths of some defect of language, or the result of metaphor taken literally, and that a great many subjects on which the modern curate thinks himself quite entitled to lay down the law were subjects on which the profoundest of the early Christians recognized that nothing very definite could be said.

I admit that Rashdall does not seem to me half so strong when he leaves his own field of philosophy for that of social economy—where I think he reasons more with his heart than his head. But no doubt it never does any of us any harm to be warned against being too comfortable!

I hope you have not felt tired after all our Saturday to Monday doings. I am very glad to have heard that Symphony, though I sometimes think that with an ear so bad as mine I have no right to go to concerts!

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

JOHN BAILEY

*From the Diary*

January 3. As I approach the grand climacteric of 35 there is the usual, perhaps inevitable feeling that more ought to have been done, much more. But I am getting to feel . . . that it is my function to read more than to write, to judge more than to do, to enjoy rather than to create. And if I believe, as I certainly do, that the existence of a class of cultivated, intelligent people is of vital importance to a country, I may surely accept this as my part and not wish for a more ambitious or more obviously useful one. . . . If one thinks what a difference in the tone of English Society would be produced if one could multiply by a hundred the people who have seriously cultivated a turn for literature and art, one cannot but realize that one has a useful part to play.

January 8. Reading Manning's *Life* and *The Pope* in Browning's *Ring and the Book*. The former is waste of time, or malicious gossip about a man whose view of life

is simply meaningless to me. The latter is one of the highest utterances of the faith of one of the highest-souled of men. It is Browning's Christianity, not Pius IX or Manning's which alone can come home to us as a way of life.

February 14. Read three more of Rashdall's Sermons. I think his Christian Socialist view of property unduly narrows Christian liberty. I am not sure that on it Christ would have been justified in dining with the rich publican. Still, the spirit is admirable and most necessary for me and others.

April 6. What Bruce Richmond points out in his letter is that while he hopes to see me in politics, yet there can be no more useful work than that of "irradiating the humanities", which he assures me I can and do daily accomplish. I hope this is not only friendship's voice, for there is nothing I so wish to be able to believe about myself, and I seriously think no work in our world can be more sincerely useful.

July 12. Hughes came twice and made me read some Nietzsche. He is an extravagant Carlyle, with Carlyle's morality left out. There is nothing good in him but his literary vision and his praise of personality in an impersonal age.

October 2. Yesterday Temple Church. Ainger quoted a fine saying: "It is comparatively easy to despise earth: what is hard is conversing with heaven." It struck me that there was the difference between Stoicism and Christianity—and perhaps between Stoicism and Platonism.

October 12. Yesterday morning *Phædrus* . . . is he [Plato] the only man in all literature who ever combined the gift of marvellously graceful trifling with the note, when he has occasion, of a seer of all time and all Eternity?

October 17. This morning I have finished M. Aurelius's *Thoughts*. . . . It is the noblest and sincerest book of spiritual life outside Christianity; indeed I do not know what Christian book of the kind can be placed higher. Not, I think, the *Imitation*: for its extravagances and want of grasp of things as a whole is too great a set-off against its beautiful piety. And we live among men and women as M. Aurelius did, not among monks as Thomas à Kempis did.

November 23. Read before dinner Chaucer's *Dido* in the *Good Women*. How prettily human he is; and how far from

Thou majestic in thy sadness  
at the doubtful doom of human kind.

December 21. Mowbray Donne told me a good story yesterday. A clergyman begins a sermon on the Creation with "Man was made perfect, and he . . ." At this point he is called away on business, and a friend enters his study, sees the open manuscript of the sermon, and continues it: "Man was made perfect and he . . . would have remained perfect, but she . . ."

1900

We became engaged in January and were married on April 26th.

*To the Hon. Sarah  
Lyttelton*

118, Ashley Gardens, S.W.1.  
February 8, 1900

Well! I've not got a letter this morning and I feel like the schoolboy who very often, when he gets a flogging, feels that it is all right because he really deserves it!

And yet somehow I don't think you have voluntarily administered it! Perhaps like the schoolmaster you have felt it a "painful duty"; or perhaps—I don't know what, you have been too busy, or have found it possible to "do something intelligent" yesterday! I forgot in yesterday's scrap to laugh at you for that: did you notice, in your letter of two days ago, that you said the weather was so odious that it was impossible to "do anything intelligent": so you were writing to me! You shall certainly hear of that again!

Well! I must tell you about dinner last night. It was a delightful little party: Arthur Balfour—you can imagine how pleased I was to meet *him*—Lady Betty B. (Gerald B. is ill), Sir Alfred Lyall, Mrs. Horner, and a Mr. and Mrs. Gordon, who knew you—and perhaps she was a relation but I did not make out about her quite, though I took her in to dinner. It was a very amusing party and I enjoyed listening to the talk enormously! One story I must tell you which Alfred related. It appears that at a dinner of men at which a good many rather distinguished personages

were present, I forget who exactly, but Goschen and other Cabinet Ministers among them, that horrid creature, Frank Harris, the journalist, *Saturday Review*, etc., was present, and was sitting between Alfred and Arthur B. He struggled to attract attention to himself, as such creatures do, and finally shouted—*à propos de bottes*—"The great curses of modern life are Christianity and journalism!" The falling of this bomb produced an absolute silence, in the midst of which Arthur Balfour quietly turned to Harris and said: "Christianity of course—but why journalism?" Alfred says that even Harris was quite extinguished. And Arthur Balfour pleased me last night by laughing enormously at it and saying he had quite forgotten it, but that it really was very good! As it is. . . .

Another thing which amused me was the saying that there was only one man in the House of Commons who could manage his voice well enough to make an audible whisper when necessary, like the whisper of love on the stage: and that was "a man with whom one hardly associated the idea either of whispering or of love—Joe!"

It was all very pleasant and a very interesting evening to me. What a charming manner A.B. has! He doesn't frighten me in the least as great personages usually do! . . . By the way, if you are going in for French history and literature, I will lend you two or three magazine articles of mine on French poets. Would you care, at least? I dare say you have more than you want to read already, though—and I hope we know each other well enough by now for you not to feel bound to say you would like to see my effusions!

. . . I slipped back into the park after seeing you, and my old pony flew like the wind from the Marble Arch to the Serpentine after her repose in Cumberland Place. I was at the W.O. from 11.45 till 2.0, and shall go there again at 5.30, but there is not a great deal going on there as most people are away. I lunched with *Pickwick* very pleasantly, and thought again that Dickens is on the whole much more of a man of *genius* though much less of a man of



letters than Thackeray. Sam Weller is surely a *creation* like nothing of Thackeray's unless perhaps Becky Sharp. And yet Thackeray is ten times his superior as a writer. Always sober, human, musical, and rhythmical, and always in good taste. It is like Shakespeare and his contemporaries—to compare small things with great—Shakespeare who writes execrable things, like Dickens, which a hundred lesser men would have known how to avoid—but wipes them out by giving us Falstaff—or Ophelia!

To Rev. F. G. and Mrs. Ellerton <sup>1</sup>

The Chantry,

Ross,

Herefordshire

August 30, 1900

MY DEAR FRANK AND SERENA,

It can only be one word—and you will not wish for more!

You will just be receiving my long letter about so many things—all now so unimportant. I hope it will not by any false note add to your grief.

It came, I needn't say, as a terrible shock to us this morning. My poor little only godchild who looked so well a fortnight ago and so quietly and wistfully interested in the world that seemed to lie before her: and now it is all over, as far as we can *see*, though, thank God, there is much more than sight to give us mysterious hopes for that little living personality, that we had hardly had time to realize as a personality!

God help you both! I have myself known no great sorrow since my mother's death, and can tell so little of your feelings. But I think I can tell something—the blankness of your grief, the mystery of the unexplained little life, to which, as to so much else in our world, only faith, not any knowledge or experience that we can attain to, can

<sup>1</sup> This letter refers to the death of Mr. and Mrs. Ellerton's baby girl, Beryl, who was John's godchild.

give any meaning. (I was called away here and have missed the post I am afraid.) I suppose that the soul is meant, in the divine plan, to grow, like the body (only, unlike the body, never to stop growing), and so by taking in the good of experience, and by victory over the bad, to become ripe for the great change which must begin a new course, surely, of development in a higher stage; one near enough for "seeing face to face" and so learning to live and grow like, as we do not learn here. But a child's soul: with no development of good—and no taint of evil: neither the divine plan realized ever so little, nor again the human perversion and distortion of it, just ignorance only and innocence. How are we to think of it at all? Will there be through all eternity the grown and ripened souls of experience, and the infant souls of mere undeveloped innocence? Or can there be some other way of growth for these beautiful child-spirits, who travel such a very little way here?

But I did not mean to talk of these things. Sarah is thinking only of the terrible shock to you both and of Serena's loss and lonely feeling when that poor dear beautiful little body is taken away from her. She will write herself. It has been all joy for *us* so far, no sorrow at all: but these things, sad as they are, must, I think, bring you closer together even than joys. It was all so perfect—the three little ones. . . . We thought them the dearest little things we knew and loved them all, and take our own little share in your loss. We feel so near you, both of us, and you will feel, I hope, that all our love and sympathy is with you and dear little Margaret and Jacynth during these sad days.

Yours affectionately,

JOHN C.B.

Do try to go away again afterwards. It will be *far* better for you and is *right*, I am sure.

*From the Diary*<sup>1</sup>

January 18. LONDON. The only sad thing in this happy year is Lady Lyttelton's death, on December 9 . . . Ever since September and my long visit to the Chantry I had begun to feel that she was giving me back as much as anyone else can of what I lost by the death so early of my own mother. She was, as was said of her, a great blazing fire of kindness at which she liked as many people as possible to come and warm themselves. Every letter Sarah and the others had spoke of that—her wonderful welcome and active kindness to friends and to people who she thought did not get much pleasure out of life. . . . And she was not merely kind: she was stimulating and expected energy, life, reading, work, and enjoyment in everybody: a nonentity, of either the moral or intellectual sort, she would not endure. In fact she was everywhere a centre and source of life, understanding to perfection, not merely *l'art de vivre* nor even merely *l'art de laisser vivre*, but the great art *de faire vivre*.

January 23. Reading Canto XXXIII of *Paradiso* with Sarah. It has been a delightful piece of reading to do together, and however inadequate we may feel Dante's answers to theological difficulties to be, his picture of Paradise as a place of (1) light, (2) rest, (3) joy, can never be likely to have an equal. It is one of the books which one feels unworthy to read: our coldness and sluggishness are in such painful contrast to its burning ardour and energy.

February 5. Sarah and I have been reading *In Memoriam*; it is less *profound* than I once thought it, but the

<sup>1</sup> On the death of my mother, Lady Lyttelton.

people who think it profound are far more right than those who think it shallow. And it is full of Tennyson's own felicity of phrase, giving new life, and the distinction born of poetry alone, to common things.

March 20. Jebb<sup>1</sup> and Edward Lyttelton lunched yesterday, and I loved Jebb more than ever. He mentioned that Henry Sidgwick, when dying, had said to his brother Arthur that he was "fully convinced that the highest life could not be lived except on a foundation of Christian belief, or of some substitute for it." The saying is as striking as the last words are characteristic of his caution. But it is interesting to have such a confession from a man of so noble a character, and of such unflinching sincerity.

April 8. An incapacity for falling in love is no proof of incapacity for living in love. The real love comes after knowledge. We cannot be as deep and intimate till after the ordinary stage of falling in love is past.

May 3. I have spent the time since I came back chiefly in reading Catullus, which I have gone all through with Ellis' assistance, and Monro's, too, occasionally. I am very glad indeed to have done it. He is certainly one of the half-dozen greatest of the world's lyrical poets, with a gift of plain and yet perfect utterance which is more Greek than any Greek I know except Plato now and then. The combination of directness, bare simplicity, and absolute propriety and beauty is almost magical. Perhaps he took as much trouble as Horace, and indeed his task is a harder one—but the effects are as unlike as it is possible to be. The *felicitas* of Catullus, far from being *curiosa*, seems to me the easiest thing in all the world. . . . How much Landor owed to him and how much everyone who cares for getting the thing said perfectly and finally must owe to him. But I should like an edition with his ugly side left out—his filth is made doubly odious by the airy grace and delicacy of his best things, and by the noble tenderness of his feeling for his brother.

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir Richard Jebb, M.P. for Cambridge University.

[After my mother's death we shared her house, The Chantry, near Ross, Herefordshire, with my sister Hester, until her marriage in 1904 with the Rev. Cyril Alington, successively Head Master of Shrewsbury and of Eton, and now Dean of Durham.]

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

20, Egerton Gardens, S.W

March 19, 1901

DEAR FRANK,

Well, well! My poor article is certainly too much honoured in having so much talking about it! But one word: for you really are unreasonable (however much pleasure your letters give us!)

The *whole* of your attack rests, I say again, on the false assumption that I equal Crabbe with Catullus, with Virgil, with Wordsworth (whose *Excursion* I by no means consign to limbo—another misinterpretation; I only say what is true: that Wordsworth can be known without reading it—tho' I have read it twice and the *Prelude*, too, with the greatest pleasure!) I took the greatest pains to say again and again that Crabbe is among the second-class men, as Watteau is among the painters; though Crabbe, like Watteau, can do *some* things which greater men might envy. That is really all! and so plainly true, surely! Of course I'm not annoyed: why should I be? . . . Aren't you led wrong by the curious delusion, so common nowadays, that no poetry which has nothing of the *romantic* in it is poetry at all? And by an unreasoning prejudice against the rhymed couplet? Note again that I never said rude things of Juvenal, whom I delight in—only a plain truth.

To his Wife

I've written to Kathleen <sup>1</sup> and have about two minutes more—I wish they were twenty—but I will just use them

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Arthur Lyttelton.

to wish you good-night and send you another scrap of love.  
Tell the baby<sup>1</sup> what I was reading to-day in the train:

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
    Father will come to thee soon;  
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
    Father will come to thee soon.  
Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
    Silver sails all out of the west,  
Under the silver moon,  
    Sleep my little one, sleep my pretty  
        one, sleep.

And then they say—some silly people—that Tennyson ought to have occupied himself with the problems of the age, forsooth!

<sup>1</sup> Sybella Jane, born September 3, 1901.

1902

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

The Athenæum  
March 16, 1902

DEAR FRANK,

... This paper tells you I have attained one long-desired goal. I was elected last Monday, with six blackballs—I should like to know who, and why, they were—and 262 votes: just 200 to spare. One man was pilled—one had only three blackballs. . . . The odd thing was that my ecclesiastically minded self had such distinguished representatives of science and agnosticism—but *not one Bishop* and not a parson at all except Ainger. Roffen<sup>1</sup> could not get here that week or he would have brought up his episcopal brethren.

However, it all went well, and I am pleasantly installed here and have no more club entrance fees to pay if I live to be 100!

... They were delightful to read—all your sayings about your visit to us. I do assure you—and I believe myself to be an unusually truthful person—that it still shines as a very bright spot in our winter. Indeed I have never enjoyed any visitor so much, for, as you know, tho' I love all the world to drop in at luncheon or come to dinner, I am very apt to be bored with people who stay or with whom I stay. I always feel there is no escape and they'll still be here to-morrow, and how *shall* we get through three days of them? But with the right people, fit but very few, *a fortiori* with the rightest such as F.G.E. and

<sup>1</sup> Edward Stuart Talbot, Bishop of Rochester, later of Southwark, and finally of Winchester. He had married my half-sister, Lavinia Lyttelton.

S.E. it all goes perfectly, and the careful sickle will reap much profit and more pleasure in all sorts of ways.

Well, we will repeat!

I daresay you have forgotten all the interesting things you say about Lamb and FitzGerald and J.C.B. in your last, but I have not and shall not, and *will* bear in mind your most just reproof for being too apt to drag in an Immortal into company of very mortal order—just to dazzle and overwhelm them! It comes partly of my genuine conviction that no true criticism is done except in the presence of the highest standards—to tell the truth about Phillips you ought to *think* about Marlowe and Shakespeare—but yet not necessarily to mention them. I will note and remember.

*The Keswick Hotel*<sup>1</sup>

*To his Wife*

*April 8, 1902*

Here we are—and I have had to write a long letter to Octavia Hill<sup>2</sup> in reply to one I had from her this morning about various matters. I enclose it that you may see her curious modesty and ridiculous deference to your superior husband! It is very odd she is so polite. But the result of it is bad—for I had to give her my views on all these subjects and it is now ten o'clock. . . .

I had an excellent quick journey thro' that fine country up to Crewe, in a second-class carriage by myself, reading *Times*, *Standard* and Swinburne's *Tristram*. It's *very* fine really as verse, and even as poetry. No one in English in the nineteenth century keeps so continuously on so high a level of style. Verse after verse, each more perfect, more finely hung and moulded, than the last. And who has such a sense of the beauty and delight not only of the wind and the sea but of the physical energy and ardour of our human bodies? But of course he cannot

<sup>1</sup> He was spending a few days with Mr. Percy Matheson on a walking tour in the Lake country.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Octavia Hill, the well-known social worker, and one of the founders of the National Trust.



make the thing a tale of spiritual beauty as M. Arnold does. 'The flesh is too much with him.' But Iseult's prayer, alone in Cornwall, praying for Tristram and yet not renouncing or repenting her sin, is a very finely and powerfully imagined thing.

. . . We got up to find a glorious sun in a cloudless sky, and it has been so all day, and yet cold enough to make a long walk all invigorating and not a whit fatiguing. . . . The beauty, the variety, the delicacy of line—so grand and yet so exquisitely and finely cut—of these mountains is indescribable. . . . Then by the dark, lonely tarn, with lots of snow lying by it—and, I should have said, snow everywhere marking the anatomy of the mountains—we began our descent to Patterdale and Ullswater. This is the grand side of Helvellyn, and nothing on earth could look wilder and grander than the Striding Edge of him—a bleak precipice looking to the Ullswater direction—so to pleasant lowland woods—often looking back and talking of Gardner and Harnack and also of more healing things. . . .

To-morrow we start at 10.0 in our own carriage like gentlemen, drive to Seathwaite, walk over Styhead Pass to Wastwater, lunch, and back to Buttermere, via Blacksail Pass and Ennerdale.

Warmingham Rectory,  
Sandbach  
August 11, 1902

From Rev. F. G. Ellerton

. . . Yes, I have read the Matt.A., which of course I saw was yours, and I agree with most of it most cordially. What you say about his contribution to theology is well said and true *on the whole*.

And I can't for the life of me see the point of your Monica line.<sup>1</sup> The other two quotations, I grant you, are poetry itself (and most characteristic of Matt.), but I do

<sup>1</sup> M. Arnold's sonnet: "Monica's Last Prayer". The line referred to is "Thus Monica: and died in Italy."

think that you have taken paste for diamonds with regard to the first. For one thing the line has no meaning whatever as detached from context—and yet you dare to quote it in the same breath as *E la sua volontade e nostra pace* (ah! how one's pen likes writing that). Nor with the whole sonnet do I like it more. Quite well touched, quite characteristically. *But*, quite spoiled poetically by its controversial ending.

“Creeds pass, rites change, no altar standeth whole.”

Why drag that in? Most inappropriate to Monica, and a most incongruous superstructure to be built on her wish. No! No! his theology spoils his poetry as theology usually does, *always* when controversial, on whichever side. Besides, Matt.'s sonnets are quite his weakest things. Come! you who profess to be a judge of the sonnet, lay your hand on your bosom and confess it. Now Sohrab I agree with you about most furiously. It has the breadth of the *Odyssey*. Why not have quoted the quite immortal: “In his cool hall” etc? There, if you like, is a whole civilisation touched off in strokes of a master's brush. It is like Browning's “Tomb at St. Praxed's”, only Matt.'s is perhaps the finer as being the briefer and more poetical. (There's a concession from a devotee of R.B.!)

You know what I call the lozenge system, viz., carrying a few select lines of poetry about in a mental *bonbonnière* to suck at intervals to keep your poetical palate clean, has its dangers. I don't think I at all agree that *all* Matt.'s lozenge lines in the famous Essay are by the best makers—or rather that he has occasionally himself been nodding when he gathered them from the best makers and so got hold of . . . you see? And so I should say of your Monica line. This is a long rigmarole, but when you sit on Olympus and bid us open our mouths and shut our eyes and swallow your lozenges, I for one shall always call out and insist on having a good look at them first.

Glad you had a little slap at that stoopid old Swinburne. He's like a rocket—goes up with a rush and makes beautiful stars when he goes off all right, but when he

doesn't, gets amongst the crowd and is dangerous and explosive only.

Now I do wish we might meet this summer. But I fear you won't both come here? And even if you could, we are cookless. And I don't think you like 'plain living' except in a sonnet. (Now Daddy could write sonnets.)

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

The Chantry  
Ross, Herefordshire  
August 14, 1902

... Now for your own reviews. Let me not forget to return them. They are now safely in the envelope. No: they are out again for me to look at again and note my particular gratitude for being reminded of *Labor et gloria vita fuit, mors requies*. I remember being so struck by it in the church. It is on Tasso's grave, I think—tho' you don't say so. I know none better but Landor's—do you remember it?

Joannes Wellesley A.M.  
*Literarum quæsit gloria*  
*Videt Dei*

Nothing *could* be quite so good as that.

... But you are really all wrong, I do feel sure about the Monica, both line and sonnet. I remember twenty years ago starting in amazement at Matt.A. saying the perfect Wordsworthian line was

"And never lifted up a single stone."

Well, but it's true—within limits of course. Think of its beautiful ease of movement—all perfect but for "lifted" and "single" having the same vowel sound. And think of its consummate simplicity. It's as fine as a harebell. Well, I came to see all that after a bit, and before I knew much Matt.A. and I still remember years ago the delight of the Monica sonnet—I learnt it by heart at Bologna by Francia's picture of her—and the especial delight of that exquisite line, with its fine contrast between

the heavy monosyllable "Thus" and the graceful airy tribrach "Italy", and its rich variety of vowel sounds. And I think it's religiously beautiful, too. I wish he had left out the words "no altar standeth whole", for he knew they must jar on so much Christian feeling and would have jarred on Monica's; but they positively help his point—which is that the only true union is through common life in God, and that this remains true thro' all changes of form and language. . . .

. . . It seems to me a beautiful thing, and tho' no doubt many of his sonnets suffer from his peculiar awkwardness, and none are like Milton or Daddy, I think this and "God knows it, I am with you" and "Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting" are all "pretty well, Sir" in the great Doctor's phrase!

Another point. The Bible as literature. I do not mean of course that there is not truth to be found in the Bible, but what I mean is that the Bible is literature, the impression of mind coloured by emotion and imagination—not science, the expression of colourless mind. The N.T. everywhere contradicts itself as Newton and Euclid cannot. They cannot say "Peace on Earth" and then "I came not to bring peace". "My yoke is easy"—"Strait is the gate and narrow is the way", and a hundred other such things, but the Bible being literature *can* say them and we, I suppose, are to realize that they are all truth looked at from different points of view. It seems to me almost the difference between a truth which lives and moves and changes and adapts itself to circumstances and is spiritual, and a truth which is literal, motionless, hard, and comparatively speaking dead. That is why I do think the Creeds are a stumbling block. They materialized what ought to have remained free and spiritual, and they now bind us, as the Bible does not, in the tightly fitting swaddling clothes of the third and fourth centuries. But I am not forgetting the great services they have rendered us: or the many true and serious things to be urged against my view.

*To Percy Matheson*

*Wramplingham Hall,  
Wymondham,  
Norfolk  
August 29, 1902*

MY DEAR MATHESON,

Thanks for the circular about the memoir of Lord Aberdare. He always filled me with interest and admiration, though also, as you know, with awe and alarm. What giants in memory and accomplishment of every kind the men of his day were, and how feebly our generation lags behind them. I think we are distracted by the multiplicity of our interests, and our incapacity for saying "That is not work for *me*" or "That is not amusement for *me*"; while they, doing six or eight things brilliantly and not trying to do anything else, seem many-sided in comparison with their all-attempting, nothing-accomplishing grandchildren! Isn't our education system, too, in grave danger from the silly people who are always complaining that it is a scandal Eton or Oxford don't put this or that new subject in their course of study? However, I am not supposing that any system of education would make men like Lord Aberdare common. I always feel it was a great good fortune and of the very best sort that Napier Miles<sup>1</sup> brought me when he opened the door of that delightful circle for me. To have known Lady Aberdare alone was a liberal education.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 107.

1903

To his Wife

January 1, 1903

... Now I will recount our uneventful doings. After writing to you yesterday I went upstairs to my own fire, and reflecting that it was December 31, decided I must learn my *Ode on Intimations of Immortality* to complete my *Golden Treasury* year as usual. It has never got to the last day before. So I did that, and ultimately dozed in my chair: and then we dined (wine tolerable!), and after a cigarette went up again and talked poetry and people till bedtime, reciting a little to each other. I read your two great St. Theresa poems after I was in bed, and turned to sleep about 11.15. Did you see the night? One of the most glorious and inspiring I ever saw. It is a great hope to think we may some day in some other state of being know more about those wonderful worlds. It is only while these fleshly bonds are on us that "we cannot hear them". Do you remember the talk in the garden in the last act of *Merchant of Venice*?

To W. W. Vaughan<sup>1</sup>

March 1, 1903

DEAR WILL,

Yes, it *has* been a sad fortnight for us all.<sup>2</sup> But the whole time since Xmas has really been a wonderful insight

<sup>1</sup> At that time Assistant Master at Clifton College. Later successively Headmaster of Giggleswick School, Wellington College, and Rugby.

<sup>2</sup> Referring to the recent death of my half-brother, Arthur Lyttelton. He

into the relative measures of eternal and temporal as they are perceived by those who have the gift to see each as they really are. I believe few men have faced certain death daily approaching with serener faith—and it was a kind of condemnation of those who, like me, for instance, could not get our minds away from the “might have been” and the feeling of the “pity of it”. Not certainly altogether from the human, but more or less vulgar, pleasure that comes from seeing those one cares for in “great position”—though that was there—but also most unfeignedly from the conviction that he had gifts which were really rare and would have done great work in the Church and through the Church for the State. I felt the tragedy of it as we travelled down to Rugby; with that list of Bishops in the paper, and *his* name that would have been at the head of it, so Balfour has told Roffen: he would have named him for Winchester—only now to be read by us on his coffin. Yet we could not but think of the end of the *Apology*: “you to your life and I to my death, and whether of the two is the better, only God knows”. Small individual facts like this sometimes bring home to me, as vividly as the great staring mountains of human failure and pain, that the ultimate law and ends for which God guides his world are quite beyond anything we can guess at.

*To Rev. F. G. Ellerton*

*The Chantry,  
Ross-on-Wye  
July 29, 1903*

MY DEAR FRANK,

... I have been most exceptionally busy. I sometimes think I left leisure behind at Tanfield Court or at least at Ashley Gardens—occupations of one sort or another, *The*

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was the first Master of Selwyn College, Cambridge; then Vicar of Eccles, near Manchester, and at the time of his death Bishop of Southampton. He had married Kathleen Clive, my mother's younger sister.

*Times*, the Trust, daughters and dinners, friends and affairs multiply upon me and leave far away out of sight the days when I could ask myself after breakfast what great author I should company with or what friend I should write to. And this summer there has been the special rush of Cowper.<sup>1</sup>

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Hams,<sup>2</sup>

Birmingham

October 15, 1903

DEAR FRANK,

... We've just had such an interesting drive—over to Drayton, Sir Robert Peel's place—and old Lord Norton was full of reminiscences. He stayed there often as a young man when the house was in its great days. And it seemed strange and moving to walk round the deserted gallery of the statesmen's portraits—Duke of Wellington, Lord Aberdeen, Peel, Gladstone, Lord Derby, etc.—with one who had talked with them all in that very room! *Sic transit gloria* indeed! The famous library is now empty shelves, which the recent American tenant covered over with red silk hangings—now departed in their turn. And most of the pictures are gone, except the statesmen. But some of the poets are there—Southey, for instance, and Wordsworth (by Pickersgill) which made me think of the cold dignity of the letter offering W.W. the Laureateship!

It never can have been a nice place—"What the devil can have made Peel settle in this blackguard country?" asked Sir James Graham in Lord Norton's hearing, whose own place, be it remarked, is a few miles away!

The old man—far the most interesting person in the house—told me that he was present as a boy when Dizzy made the famous maiden speech in the House of Commons, and well remembers the threatening manner

<sup>1</sup> The edition of Cowper's Poems which he brought out.

<sup>2</sup> The home of Lord Norton where we were staying.



of his "The time will come when you shall hear me." I suppose he is the only person alive who heard those words!

Good-bye!

Yours affec.,

JOHN C.B.

*From the Diary*

February 19. Dined at Wilton Phipps's. Lord George Hamilton said some interesting things; among them that the one thing needed to make the U.S.A. friends with us was their going into *Welt Politik*. As soon as they did that they felt us to be their inevitable allies; before, we were the descendants of their only enemies.

March 29. Luncheon, 21, Carlton House Terrace. Lucy [Lady Frederick Cavendish] in brilliant form, saying more droll things in half a minute than most people say in a year—as her reply to S.'s question: "Which is the Athenæum?" "Oh, you can't mistake it; it's all black and grey, like a Deaconess!"

October 23. Dined Arthur Elliot's.<sup>1</sup> Much good Free Trade talk. [Lord] Hugh Cecil said to someone who did not understand Chamberlain's hold on people: "Oh, when you are with him, you feel yourself in the company of an agreeable rattlesnake!"

December 13. Dined Normans to meet Ronnie's most delightful little Lady Florrie;<sup>2</sup> a most graceful, exquisite little person making one think of Mme. de Sévigné: *Cette princesse est si délicieuse qu'on voudrait la manger.*

<sup>1</sup> Hon. Arthur Elliot, M.P.

<sup>2</sup> He had married Lady Florence Bridgeman, daughter of the fourth Earl of Bradford.

1904

*To Rev. F. G. Ellerton*

*February 20, 1904*

DEAR FRANK,

Yes: our correspondence has indeed fallen away from its old frequency and brilliancy—the frequency which was all on my part and the brilliancy all on yours—but the truth is that I grow a busier man every month of my life, and do not yet resist the tendency; though I am not sure whether the immense services I render to my fellowmen by my attendance at their various Committees, or lecturing them on the wisdom of Free Trade or the charms of Sicily, are equal to those I rendered to myself in the serener days when I enjoyed the “quiet air of delightful studies” in Tanfield Court. I am certainly a happier man than I was then, but that is Sarah’s doing, and I have sometimes a longing for a remote country house, a big library, and six months of quiet browse among good books, away from dinners and political meetings and book reviews and fiscalities!

But the “ugly monster shall not affect the serene air of our correspondence” (Gibbon to Lord Sheffield, who wanted a business decision from him!). I am delighted to hear Jacynth is better and the rest of you well. We also flourish, and even the twins are no longer a source of anxiety. They are like yours an ever-increasing delight—it is hard not to live in the nursery—and it would delight you to see Jenny banishing *The Times* with a roaring “No” and calling her half-reluctant Papa to take the floor and “build a house”. She demands *Johnny Crow’s*

*Garden* every morning, and when we come to the end cheerfully remarks: "Now yead it again, Daddy."

Yes, I *did* read some of Westcott, though it did not impress me as much as your Hort. But he looked—and *was* no doubt—a Saint: and after that it doesn't much matter that he thought Keble a greater poet than Wordsworth and had not a shred of humour, I suppose. Nor were his narrow notions, as to the wickedness (for himself) of taking a cab or going to a picture gallery, much to my taste.

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Savile Road,  
Oxford  
May 9, 1904

DEAR FRANK,

Are you both dead? We really want to know. There seems every reason to fear the worst!

Meanwhile we go on as usual, after our excitement of Easter weddings. Hester<sup>1</sup> is most flourishing—has certainly not been so well or a tenth part as happy since her mother died. Her man is a delightful person—highly entertaining and with an inexhaustible memory, everlastingly humorous and cheerful, and I believe very saintly underneath. *Voilà!*

I have written a good deal in *Times* and a little in *Guardian*: this week in *Times* there was a review of Blake's "Jerusalem" which I do think you will have approved—I have *now* at least made sure of an indignant post card!—and a month ago there was a three-decker on Dryden and Shakespeare. I wonder if you read it and whether the "unities" made you guess the author. I wish we met occasionally. I can't think why you neglect your duties so in the matter of May meetings! Here we are for Sunday—very pleasant but very cold. Still, Oxford is full of apple blossom and cherry blossom and lilac and birds. Yesterday I heard the nightingale out Marston way

<sup>1</sup> My sister, who had just married Cyril Alington. See p. 78.

—in fact in “nightingale copse”, if you know it. I also heard the Bishop of Oxford<sup>1</sup> preach the University Sermon wearing the Ribbon of the Garter—very pretty and effective. And a very good sermon. His strange face grows so spiritual that one forgets the ugliness.

Yours affec.,

JOHN C.B.

P.S.—Oh, here is a secret—not on any account to be mentioned.

*The Times* is going to publish the big authorized Life of Dizzy to be written from the 50 or 60 boxes of papers he left behind him, and there is a possibility that the task may be confided to J.C.B. The idea, of course, was Bruce Richmond's, but Buckle and Bell did not *reject* it. I do not say they accept it. I hesitated at first as to whether being buried deep in Dizzy's secrets, private and public, would be very edifying to one's soul—or whether enough sympathy would be born of the intimacy to permit a biography. But I decided after a week's thinking that to wait for the ideal job—which would bury me deep in Wordsworth say, or Matt., or Milton—is to get none, and one must take one's Sparta if it comes and try to adorn it. And it would be pleasant to be at last a man who had *done* something—at writing a book which, short of *total* failure, must find readers. I saw Moberley Bell about it a week ago. It lies between me and two other men, I believe. At any rate, to have been thought possible for such a big affair is an agreeable compliment to my vanity.<sup>2</sup>

All this is *most strictly* for yourselves only.

Are you a Rural Dean yet?

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Paget.

<sup>2</sup> It will be remembered that the task of writing Disraeli's life was ultimately entrusted to W. F. Monypenny, and, on his death in 1912, it was finished by G. E. Buckle.

*To his Wife*

20, Egerton Gardens, S.W.

June 27, 1904

. . . I read with some care in the train, and since, Tolstoy's remarkable discourse! I wonder what you thought of it. It seems to me in its way a very noble performance—and *The Times's* leading article very poor and incapable of seeing below the surface of things, or beyond their most temporal aspect. I can imagine the politicians of Judah telling Isaiah he had none of the severe patience which comes of the conviction that in the evolution of mankind it is ordained that good shall triumph over evil, and his replying that that triumph must show itself in conduct and character before it will show itself anywhere else. And the whole of T.'s sermon is the call we never can hear too often, the call to recognize that the only Kingdom really and eternally worth having is within us and spiritual, not without us at all, or consisting at all in the things we fight for and kill for. Yet I don't see how his liberalism is really practicable, while we are in a world in which we have a right, and perhaps a duty, to wish to live, and life depends on material conditions. If we literally turn the other cheek, either as men or nations, if we refuse to resist aggression at all, we make the reign of the brutal elements in the world more universal than before, and if we refuse to possess wealth we refuse the basis on which much that is valuable in the best sense in our existing lives is necessarily based. The vow of poverty has rarely produced saintliness, and never culture or art or philosophy.

The truth is, I really think, and it is curious enough, that Tolstoy goes wrong from what causes so many mistakes in our day—the misapplication of the scientific spirit. He who speaks so well of "the futile mental exercises which are now called Science"—futile because they have no bearing on *life* except in its lowest plane—falls into the very confusion of the man of science who is always judging art and poetry by the standard of

science. "Whosoever shall smite thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also" is surely literature not science, the poetic appeal to the higher emotions, not the jurist's legislation to be literally obeyed. No doubt we don't generally obey it at all, literally or otherwise; and our danger is not obeying it too much but too little: but that, I think, does not alter the fact that to use it as Tolstoy does is to treat poetry as prose, literature as science—which is just the source of all the errors of the people who lecture in the parks both for and against Christianity.

### *From the Diary*

March 26. Dined S. Pepys Club with Lionel [Cust].<sup>1</sup> Rather dull company and an atmosphere of allusive suppressed indecency—"We could if we would"—not to my taste at all! But quite delightful music.

April 30. To Athenæum, reading Henry James' articles on d'Annunzio; tortuous and crabbed, but in matter admirable, doing full justice to his amazing style, his power of grasping and re-creating a universe of beauty, but pointing out his fatal defect, that he makes everything turn on *passion*—and passion cannot occupy the whole canvas except when the characters—as in Antony and Cleopatra—are big enough for us to feel the tragedy of their fate. In d'Annunzio's *Triumph of Death* there is nothing great for death to triumph over.

May 15. S. and I went to King's Chapel. I then sat in the garden and strolled in the Backs, reading Books IV and V of *Paradise Lost*; just the poetry for a gorgeous day when all Nature is singing *Te Deum* like Adam and Eve.

May 22. Meriel [Mrs. John Talbot] told me of an answer of Lord Antrim's to the Mayor of Cork's invitation to assist in some function: "Sir, I wish the City

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir Lionel Cust, K.C.V.O.; at that time Director of the National Portrait Gallery, later Keeper of the King's Pictures. He had married my sister Sybil.

of Cork was at the bottom of the sea . . . and its Mayor in Hell!"

June 5. Called on Mrs. Hugh [later Lady] Bell. Lady Carlisle there, and much talk of Herbert Spencer and his eccentricities, e.g. doing gymnastic exercises in Lady C.'s garden with his secretary—both in top hats!

October 4. To Diploma Gallery with S., rejoicing in some of the Diploma pictures, less in the M. Angelo than I expected, though it has conspicuously one of the marks of all great Christian art—the wistfulness of a secret which you cannot fully fathom.

October 9. Life of Aubrey de Vere after breakfast. What a beautiful serene saintly life—and how untroubled the true Saints are by any dilettante doubts of what their vocation is. We who perhaps have no real vocation alternate between visions of practical life, of pure study, of writing for the public, of the Church, of politics, of public work. He knew his work lay in quietly and confidently being himself—and never tried to be anything else.

1905

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Grangegorman,<sup>1</sup>  
Overstrand, Cromer  
July 16, 1905

... I'm very glad you went to Paris, which must have done you a world of good and sent you back with the most delightful of all sensations—the appetite for every day which comes as a sort of reaction in favour of one's ordinary round after a bout of something extraordinary. I always think it the pleasantest thing in life—even pleasanter than the start on the holiday when one has had too much of the "common round".

... By the way, did you ever read what I have been reading this morning—Mrs. Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë*? If not, that would be the book for the moors. It is an amazing picture of the rough life lived there a hundred years ago—and a much more amazing picture of what three or four *children* were thinking about in the middle of all these cock-fighting, drinking ruffians. Never anywhere was such a family of genius, I should say. Take this, for instance, which I have just put into my commonplace book—it is Charlotte at school aged 16: "Some one said she was always talking about clever people, Johnson, Sheridan, etc. She said: 'You don't know the meaning of the word clever. Sheridan was clever—scamps often are—but Johnson hadn't a spark of *cleverality* in him.'"

It may be true or not: but what a distinction for a girl of 16 to make!

<sup>1</sup> A house belonging to my half-brother, Edward Lyttelton, at that time just appointed to the head-mastership of Eton College. We had taken this house for the summer months.



. . . Well, there's an unintended dissertation. But I see you ask for a suggestion of something long to read when you are away. What can I suggest but the old familiar things? If you read alone I would suggest a Greek or Roman—all Sophocles, for instance. I have just read the *Œdipus Coloneus*—oh, the great choruses of it and that most awe-inspiring march of the blind man to the place of his death, which the thunder calls him to, and which he will not reveal even to his daughter—only as a part of the divine purpose to Theseus! Nothing can be finer than the contrast between the volubility with which he denounces first Creon and then Polyneices, and the brief quiet sentences in which he tells them all the hour is come.

. . . The children grow and prosper and are as happy as the day is long. I play golf and we both bathe and have dinner in the garden. Such is rural bliss! And so life slips away! I am now 41, alas! What plans one has had and has not accomplished! Lots of the failures are one's own fault, of course—that one knows—at least I know, too well: but there is also a sadness in recognizing more and more, as the years go on, the definite limitations that make themselves plain, and having simply to say to oneself: "I have not the strength, physical or intellectual, to do what he or she is doing and I should wish to do." I have good enough health on the whole, but both body and mind are so much more easily tired than other people's. These are the facts that one begins to recognize as not now to be modified. There they are and one has to make the best of them.

### *From the Diary*

April 12. After dinner—an excellent dinner!—and in the train to Liverpool, reading the two fine books of *The Excursion*. Perhaps neither the Wanderer nor the Solitary would have approved my recording the virtues of the Adelphi Hotel cook!

June 19. Much pleased with a letter from Bruce [Richmond] who says Hadow<sup>1</sup> and others are enthusiastic over my Bridges article, and he wants to know how I manage to be interesting and yet "keep to the middle of the road". It is just the praise that pleases me. The thing is to make the true seem new: not to make the new seem true.

July 3. Found children flourishing. Jenny peeped her little golden head round the door, her eyes all sparkling with joy and wickedness, and said: "I've been thinking of you all the time, Daddy!" Alas, girls of three, as well as men, can be deceivers ever!

November 7. Ronnie Norman dined. . . . He told me that Lady Ampthill had herself told him she was taken by Bismarck, when at a ball, into his own study, where he said to her: "You see I have not got many pictures here. There are three: my wife, my King, and my friend," pointing to a portrait of Dizzy. Dizzy speaks in the letters of Bismarck's thin little voice—contrasting with the awful things he says.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Hadow, later Principal of Armstrong College, Newcastle: subsequently Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield University.

1906

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Rusland Hall,<sup>1</sup>

Ulverston

August 22, 1906

DEAR FRANK,

It's high time I thanked you for your charming letters. It's no use saying again how much I enjoyed our talks, and our walks, and our flowers—and our children and our wives and all the pleasant things that came together to make that week happy if not healthy. Let us only resolve to repeat the happiness as soon as may be: and add the health.

... I looked out your other Catullus passages—but alas! our numbers are not the same and so I can't find any of your references. But I'm so glad we did turn Catullus up together, he is the very essence of *belles lettres*, ordinary things said so beautifully that you can't forget them: life made *fresh* by beauty, the same and not the same. It borders on the same subject as I was difficultly discussing in last Friday's *Supplement*—Rhyme and Blank Verse. Did you read it? I had no books up here and had to do the thing on the principle Johnson said was so easy: "Why, Sir, any man can write quickly who writes out of his own mind." Alas, it depends upon the mind!

I am now writing on the new *Oxford Treasury of English Literature* and again feeling my need of learning—or in default of it, of accessible libraries. By the way, I congratulate you on your Æschylean churchwarden. I hope he inspired you to finish the *Agamemnon*. I have

<sup>1</sup> A house in the Lake District which we had taken for August and September of this year.

done so, with labour, awe, and the joy of wonder. It's an *astonishing* thing. I only wish Clytæmnestra didn't make so much of her reliance on Ægisthus at the end. It robs her a little of the lonely glory of her ἀνδρόβουλον κέαρ.

Good-bye. We must certainly meet and write oftener. Can't you come to London in the autumn? Love to you all. Rachel [our second twin daughter], said to me yesterday in a meditative way as I led her downstairs: "That was Jacynth's <sup>1</sup> room." So you see they are not forgotten—and never I hope will be—nor themselves forget!

Yours affec.,

JOHN C.B.

Sal was much delighted with your account of the pleasures of being revered!

*To Percy Matheson*

October 13, 1906

DEAR PERCY,

Collins has delayed his coming but he comes with none the less sincere gratitude! It was very pleasant, as always, being with you and Mrs. Matheson: and the very sight of Oxford always does me good. No place in the whole world, I think, touches me quite as Oxford does. And gatherings like the Gaudy are good things I am sure. They are goalposts or rather milestones that make one look back, as one passes, on the miles that have been travelled, and they bring a mood of pleasant pensiveness very suitable to Oxford, and I hope also a little shame that the journey that has been so very happy has not earned its happiness rather more. And the realization of the greatness of the College and the good things that its sons are doing in so many places is a stimulus that ought not to be forgotten in a quarter of an hour! Nor your speech—the one piece of eloquence in an evening that had several good speeches.

Good-bye. I think our friendship has gained ground.

<sup>1</sup> Jacynth, Mr. Ellerton's second daughter.

this year—and that is something. With warmest messages from us both to Mrs. Matheson.—Your ever,

JOHN BAILEY.

We took the children to the Zoo yesterday and had a glorious afternoon—only it is melancholy to discover that one is too old to ride an elephant with dignity!

### *From the Diary*

February 14. Lady Frances Balfour told S. that at a meeting of Free Trade ladies she had been arguing the eternal Protection question with A.J.B. and he had wound up by saying: "That's all very well, but you'll live to see me defending Free Trade against the Trade Unions!"

February 22. Found the three children all singing verses as loud as they could against each other, and creating a perfect Babel of sound.

March 9. To church at 12. Inge<sup>1</sup> on St. John's use of certain words—how he never speaks of faith and knowledge but only of believing and knowing, as if neither process could ever be complete.

March 10. Spent the afternoon with Frederick Rockell—of the Co-operative Wholesale Society. He pleased me when we were looking at some ship pictures by quoting Bridges' "Whither O splendid Ship". No one who hasn't a real turn for poetry quotes or cares for that. I hardly know a better test of imagination.

March 31. Dined Malcolms, meeting young Simon, M.P.,<sup>2</sup> the man who is said to have such a great future at the Bar, and perhaps in politics.

April 11. It is to the honour of Scott that he could keep such a politician as I am with an unopened *Times* before him ever so long, while I pursued the beloved Jeanie's fortunes. And indeed there is no better story in the world.

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. W. R. Inge, later Dean of St. Paul's.

<sup>2</sup> Now Rt. Hon. Sir John Simon, M.P., Foreign Secretary.

May 2. Read some Leopardi—especially the magnificent *Ginestro* ode. The most resolved denial of human hope and recognition of an enemy in Nature and God that any great poet has written since Lucretius.

June 24. Heard three things worth remembering. Mrs. Benson's (wife of Archbishop Benson) saying that Liberalism was principle without experience; Dizzy's "Taxation is called civilization and confiscation tyranny, but they come to the same thing in the long run"; and the criticism of the Treasury Officials; morals of the publican and manners of the Pharisee.

July 22. The lights near Rusland Pool meadows were lovely as I sat before dinner. Nothing could be more exquisitely peaceful; the sun from behind the house shining on the big elms by the gate; the rooks cawing as they settled on its branches; the rabbits creeping out on the lawn; the bees humming with busy monotony in the lime-tree in the garden.

August 12. Read Meredith's wonderful poem on Napoleon, which says everything there is to be said on that inhuman genius.

October 2. There are compensations in living at Windsor; that noble Chapel where we went at 5.0; the exquisitely perfect singing, the noble lesson—as it happened Ezekiel: "The soul that sinneth, it," and not its father or its son, "shall die"—and the Prodigal Son, both magnificently read, and the slow-gathering dusk and the banners of the Knights, and the great building itself, made one of the most moving services I was ever at.

November 4. Much playing with children, who are the joy of life.

November 7. John Talbot and Medge dined.<sup>1</sup> A delightful *père et fille* and a delightful evening.

<sup>1</sup> Rt. Hon. J. G. Talbot, P.C., M.P. for Oxford University, and his daughter, now Dame Meriel Talbot, D.B.E. He had married my eldest half-sister, Meriel Lyttelton.

November 25. There is nothing the country needs so much—more than philanthropists and public men—as a large class devoted to the things of the mind.

December 1. Bishop Wilberforce, staying in a country house where were Palmerston and Melbourne and a statesman addicted to free speech, insisted on walking to church while the statesman on the contrary preferred to drive. The latter, pursuing the Bishop, looked out from the brougham and called out the opening of the old version of Psalm 1: “Blest is the man who ne’er consents by ill advice to *walk*”, which the Bishop gladly caught up: “Nor stands where sinners are, nor *sits* where men profanely talk.”

1907

*To W. W. Vaughan*

*Hawarden Castle,  
Chester*

*June 1, 1907*

MY DEAR WILL,

I do think Giggleswick is your present call unless something greater than Sedbergh comes to supersede it, and that you will be happiest in seeing your plough carry its furrow right over the hill of difficulty: and I am more confident than ever I was that the hard climbing is really done now, and the good land ready to be entered into and possessed.

. . . I shall look forward eagerly now to the developing future of the school. But you must not stay there always. I mean you to rule Rugby yet.

We are here for two or three days with Lady Frederick Cavendish, and found Sir Richard Solomon here last night, with whom I have had endless and most reassuring talk about the future of South Africa. It is the usual reward of the moderate man to be called, as Maxse calls him, Sir Renegade Solomon, but people like Alfred Lyttelton—whose policy he totally disagrees with tho' he is very fond of the man—tell me he is a most honest man, and it is very satisfactory to hear how hopeful he is for the future.

. . . Altogether it was a great contrast to such mischievous talk as Milner's in to-day's paper about the under-dog. And as he has worked at close quarters with Milner, Rhodes, Botha, Kitchener, Schreiner and others, you can imagine I did some political pumping last night.



To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

20, Egerton Gardens, S.W.

October 7, 1907

. . . Sarah was indecently—even uproariously—amused by your description of me as the Complete Prig! I was not, I need scarcely say, as I had not discovered the resemblance! But between you and Sarah I suppose I must believe in it—and end by the self-improvement that comes of laughter! I have had a sad time these days with Molière—for though I have loved him so long he has let me hammer at his door for many weary hours without opening it a bit—and I have consequently had to talk about him miserably without ever once getting inside. It is one of the perpetual disillusionings of criticism: that of finding how often a special affection for an author leaves you with nothing whatever to say about him.

Good-bye. I am so sorry for all your worries.

Your affec.,

JOHN C.B.

### *From the Diary*

May 12. Sat for a time reading Augustine's *Confessions*, especially the chapter about his baptism and Monica's death. Few books have moved me more. No such splendid intellect ever became more God-possessed than he! And what a trumpet-call his still is, for a life in God as the only real life. But his scorn of the learning and accomplishment of his early years perhaps shows that the seed was already sown which was to ripen into the narrow austerities and rigidly ethical outlook of Jansenism.

July 22. Lunched with Crosier<sup>1</sup> at Boodle's. One good thing he told me—the Eckhardstein who married Maple's daughter said of the Kaiser when in his service: "My master is an ass; when he goes to a christening he wants to be the baby; when he goes to a wedding he wants to be

<sup>1</sup> His eldest brother.

the bride; when he goes to a funeral he wants to be the corpse!"

August 5. Wrote Napier Miles,<sup>1</sup> refusing to come forward as Unionist Free Trader candidate for his division.

October 1. Reading *Timon of Athens*. I am sure it is much more completely the work of Shakespeare than the critics admit. It has everywhere the mark of his intellectual and verbal prodigality, the things in which he was unique.

November 5. Read Shaw's *Major Barbara*. Was there ever an author with so little poetry in his brains? I think it may be a good thing these social nightmares should be set on us, but this is not the way in which any solution can come, for there is no healing in it and no love.

November 6. Lucy [Cavendish] dined; looking older, but what an old age of humour and saintliness and kindness and intelligent interests it will be.

November 19. Lunched Athenæum with Strachey<sup>2</sup> who told me a story John Morley<sup>3</sup> had told him about Balfour. He took A.J.B. to see Herbert Spencer, and as they stood waiting on the doorstep said to A.J.B., "Now, Balfour, would not you have preferred this life—philosophy—to all your political success?" "Oh no," said A.J.B., "certainly not; but if the life of science had been possible, *that* would have been the thing for me."

December 10. Invited by Prothero<sup>4</sup> to write on the literature of 1840–70. Decided to decline, my line being not the historical but the interpretative study of poetry.

December 18. Dined Harold Russell's. He told me that when the Kaiser visited Lady Ampthill he said to Theo Russell, who was seeing him downstairs: "I like your Sir

<sup>1</sup> Philip Napier Miles, of Kings Weston, Shirehampton, Bristol: composer of Symphony in C Major for full orchestra: *Westward Ho!* (an opera); *Markheim* (Carnegie Award, 1921), and other works.

<sup>2</sup> St. Loe Strachey, editor of the *Spectator*.

<sup>3</sup> Later Viscount Morley, O.M.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. George Prothero, editor of the *Quarterly Review*, later Sir George Prothero.

Edward Grey; he is a fine specimen of the English country gentleman." "Yes, sir, and a strong Foreign Secretary." Kaiser, sharply: "What do you mean by saying that?" "Oh, that when he decides on a policy, sir, he goes right through with it." Kaiser, abruptly getting into his carriage: "So do I!"

December 28. Read Gosse's curious *Father and Son*. I wish I was not so "tossed by every wind of doctrine". I am quite in a different mood from what I was after reading Hort, for instance. So many religious books—much even of the Bible itself—are composed so entirely from the point of view of the "narrowing nunnery walls" of mere Hebraism, that they revolt one's instinctive sense that next to the certainty of the need and joy of right conduct lies the certainty of the need and joy of art and letters. Anything that excludes this contradicts the experience of human nature itself in moments that are very nearly its highest—the moments of ecstasy in the presence of poetry or music or landscape. But then, if we fly to mere Hellenism, that contradicts the experience of the higher moments of spiritual and moral life.

1908

*To his Wife*

*The Athenæum,  
Pall Mall, S.W.1  
May 5, 1908*

They had not finished cross-examining John Murray<sup>1</sup> when they adjourned to-day. He made a first-rate witness with his perfect simplicity and frankness. Bruce was charmed with him and said he was sure any jury would give such a man £10,000 damages for being accused of being anything but honest. We thought F. E. Smith<sup>2</sup> was very dull and stupid for the plaintiff; he made a lot of mistakes and gave no impression of ability. *The Times* man was much better—though Murray scored against him once or twice. Darling<sup>3</sup> was excellent, dignified, quick, and firm.

*To his Wife*

*The Athenæum,  
Pall Mall, S.W.1  
May 6, 1908*

Well, it is very tiresome, isn't it? But there's no help for it! However, we are near the goal—for Bankes<sup>4</sup> is half-way through his opening speech and I think he'll call

<sup>1</sup> This letter refers to the action brought by Mr. John Murray against *The Times* on account of a letter which had appeared in the paper on the question of the price of *Queen Victoria's Letters* published by Murray. It had contained a remark about "thirty pieces of silver". My husband and Mr. Bruce Richmond both appeared as witnesses for *The Times*. In the result Mr. Murray was awarded £7,500 damages.

<sup>2</sup> Later the Earl of Birkenhead.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Justice Darling, later Lord Darling.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Justice Bankes, later Lord Justice Bankes.

Bruce Richmond and me directly he finishes, so that I shall catch the 3.55 quite easily. Meanwhile it's been rather more amusing, and there were such pretty remarks made about the literary attainments, etc., of a person of your acquaintance by J. M. and the Counsel that I did not quite know which way to look, and afterwards Bankes talked so politely of Bruce and me that Bruce whispered: "Ought we to get up and bow to the Court?" Still, it's a bore hanging on, and I shall hate going into the box—because whatever I say will be disagreeable to someone.

*To Rev. F. G. Ellerton*

*Rusland Hall,  
Ulverston  
August 23, 1908*

. . . We enjoyed your visit here very much—though I somehow felt you were not quite well the latter part of the time, for you would leave Hadow to do all the talking and kept Pandora's box of accomplishments half shut! But there is no concealing—I found—such gifts and graces as my Revd. friend's, and Hadow was vastly impressed by your omniscience, to say nothing of other things. He told Sarah he had scarcely ever met anyone who was so alive on so many sides, etc., etc. But I must spare your blushes!

. . . I have been over to see Gordon Wordsworth, "Daddy's" grandson. I wish you had been with me. He is a well-groomed, good-looking Etonian—properly alive to the honour of being his grandfather's grandson. He showed me endless portraits, all bad except the Haydon, which I am glad to say is now the property of his cousin who hires Rydal Mount, and even that is better in the *Golden Treasury* engraving. We went over to Rydal Mount and saw everything: the terrace he made, and the meadow he bought and threatened to build on if the Flemings turned him out of Rydal Mount.

*From the Diary*

January 12. Much exercised by a sermon from a disciple of Gore . . . giving up all to Christ. It spoke frequently of our not refusing the call when it comes. But is it easy to recognize the call in definite matters? And does this whole conception of religion, swallowing up and destroying all the rest of life, really grow out of the Gospel? Christ had many friends and followers who lived their ordinary lives. And what meaning can such talk have for the farmer and the shopkeeper?

March 1. Gave Arthur Elliot a definite reply, refusing to stand as he had suggested for the Isle of Thanet against Marks.

March 13. As Alfred [Lyttelton] said, what a monument of sheer ability Asquith's career is. He was never civil to solicitors, and succeeded at the Bar; never civil to women, and is courted by Society; never civil to politicians, and he is Prime Minister.

Dined Bob Cecil's.<sup>1</sup> Lord Cromer told several stories, one of which was that Gordon once told Rhodes that after his Tai-ping achievements he was offered the Yellow Jacket and a roomful of gold. Of course he refused the gold. "You were wrong, General," said Rhodes; "money is power." And that was exactly his view; he cared for money in order to do big things, not for himself. Lord Salisbury once told Lord Cromer: "Rhodes has been here after having an afternoon with the King of the Belgians. He says he feels just as if he had been having an hour with Satan! . . ." Rhodes was not squeamish, as Lord S. said!

JUNE 13. WELCOMBE, STRATFORD-ON-AVON [where we were staying with Sir George and Lady Trevelyan]. Old Henry James, with his odd slowness, has given me some delightful talks; of which I only note his feelings of the mediocrity and narrowness of Tennyson—the one thing in which he vexed me—and I think he is all wrong, though, of

<sup>1</sup> Lord Robert Cecil, later Viscount Cecil of Chelwood.

course, there is a bourgeois limited side of Tennyson. H. James said the impression of America to him, in winter at any rate, was one of *ugliness, ugliness*—he repeated it in a kind of groan!—but on the other hand he said it was interesting to meet men who had never thought of themselves as belonging to any class—a thing impossible in feudal Europe. He talked to me in the church of Stratford of the inscrutable mystery of Shakespeare: the works on the one side and, on the other, that dull face, and all the stories we know of the man; “commonplace; commonplace; almost degrading.”

July 12. Finished H. James’ *Portrait of a Lady*. Its cleverness is of course amazing, and I like hearing his voice, as I often do. But I miss any sense of the really great issues of life—no one either thinks about or does anything great—and I don’t like ending on a note of interrogation.

July 15. Hadow played to us all the evening, and when he wasn’t playing talked brilliantly. I only remember two things: “Pessimism is only cowardice reduced to a system.” “Chopin is a French novel; sometimes good and sometimes bad, but always just that.”

July 31. Read the *Apology*—the first thing which, in 1880, opened my eyes to the form and beauty of Greek literature—and still one of the most moving pieces of prose in the world, and one of the most perfect in form. The ethical attitude, however noble—unequalled outside Christianity, no doubt—is perhaps just a little self-conscious, possibly even a little self-righteous. But Socrates is never elsewhere so serious, so high above verbal and logical quibbles, so touchingly human.

August 2. Jenny and I walked up the hill, and after tea sat in the garden watching the slowly falling sun and the lengthening shadows. All very happy. “The lines are fallen in pleasant places.”

August 12. To Dove Cottage—very well kept by an old woman who had shaken hands with the poet, which gave

me pleasure in shaking hands with her. Gordon Wordsworth was full of an article in the *Nineteenth Century* about W. W. and Coleridge being regarded as French spies.

September 21. Lunched with Francis Buxton at the Grove [Cromer]. He told me that Sir. F. Lascelles<sup>1</sup> had himself told him the story of the Kaiser insisting on Rhodes dining to meet him; the Kaiser had sat after dinner in the billiard room alone with Rhodes, and when summoned by Lascelles to join the party had refused to go till he had an answer to his question: "Why did the English get so excited over my telegram to Kruger?" To which Rhodes, after demurring to such a large question, replied: "Well, if you will have an answer, sir, I can only say that I suppose a boy doesn't mind being smacked by his own mother, but he won't stand it from another boy's!"

October 25. Lunched at Kennington. Long talk with Alfred [Lyttelton] chiefly about Curzon. He says he has been enquiring through Sir W. Lawrence into Curzon's Indian work; he believes there never was such a record of strenuousness, and stimulus given. One general said, referring to his weekly interview with Curzon, afraid as he had been of it: "It stiffened one's muscles for work for the week," or some such phrase. He refused to let members of his Council send their wives to Simla and live in Clubs. "You draw eight thousand rupees a month from this country, and you shall maintain a corresponding position in the public view." Never man was bolder in his great mission—telling a Rajah, for instance, when a guest in his palace, that hitherto the palaces of India had been merely the scenes of idleness and splendour. "What I expect is that you will turn from the banqueting hall and the harem to help me in my work for the regeneration of India."

<sup>1</sup> Sir Frank Lascelles, G.C.V.O., Ambassador at Berlin 1895-1908.



1909

*To his Wife*

20, Egerton Gardens, S.W.

November 1, 1909

... I had been to early service and had been happy there thinking about you and your mother and mine and Kathleen and the great poets to whom I owe more than to the Saints in the Calendar. But I wish my faith was firmer and clearer. I often seem to myself to be forcing myself into an attitude that is not really genuine, and then I have to get back to reality by simply confessing my doubt and uncertainty. I do not expect ever to hold all that is considered to be the faith of a Christian, but I do pray I may never lose hold of the central things. But how to get a final answer, an exact answer quelling all doubts, to that old and great question: "What think ye of Christ?" That is the problem; and no doubt prayer and life must between them provide the answer.

*To Rev. F. G. Ellerton*

*Hampton Court Palace*<sup>1</sup>

June 20, 1909

MY DEAR FRANK,

The admonitions of my Domestic Critic in Ordinary are, I need not say, always welcome, as well as generally instructive, not least when provocative!

... We go back to London to-morrow. I may be plunged at once into the *Quarterly* work again, but I hope to keep clear of it till October, when I have agreed to take

<sup>1</sup> Where we were staying with Mrs. Creighton, widow of Bishop Creighton.

it over again. I didn't want to much, but Sarah and Bruce Richmond said I must. Bang goes your so flatteringly desired *magnum opus* again, but the consolation is that I honestly don't believe I've got a *magnum opus* in me! The short essay is what I do best—or rather all I can do at all. Have you seen a rather interesting article about Swinburne by Gosse in the June *Fortnightly*—personal reminiscences? It brings out the passion of poetry there was in the man—never was man more the poet born. There is a curious saying of his quoted to the effect that whenever he wrote prose he had an uneasy thought of Landor—for he felt that he never would write a sentence that Landor would have deigned to sign—which was quite true and more modest than I should have expected.

*From G. Bernard Shaw*

10, Adelphi Terrace, W.C.

November 3, 1909

DEAR SIR,

Would you mind telling me who you are?

The difficulty about anonymous journalism is that there is no way of getting such questions answered except by private inquisitiveness.

It is so exceedingly rare to find an English critic with any power of analysis in psychology—or indeed anything else—that I am justified, I think, in desiring to know which of us is capable of writing that very remarkable article on Shelley.<sup>1</sup>

Yours faithfully,

G. BERNARD SHAW

*From the Diary*

March 1. Returned London; dined Literary Society in the evening. A small party, but George Trevelyan<sup>2</sup> and I

<sup>1</sup> An article on Shelley which had just appeared in *The Times Literary Supplement*, and was republished in *Poets and Poetry*.

<sup>2</sup> George Trevelyan, later Regius Professor of History at Cambridge. O.M.

thought the pleasantest and most varied talk we had known there. The characteristics of Millais, Leighton, and Watts (who thought more of Leighton's sculpture than of his painting, said Briton Rivière); the essence of oratory; the greatness of Burke, as to which Pember<sup>1</sup> was rather a heretic; the meaning of the epithet "dinner-bell" applied to him; the value of Celtic literature, which Norman Moore<sup>2</sup> can read; the merits of *Ile des Pingouins*; comparison between Voltaire and Anatole France (Colvin hating the book for its beastliness and merely destructive quality); reminiscences of old Trelawny whom Lord Crewe and Colvin knew; of Lawrence Oliphant; the history of opium-taking; medical history of bleeding and leeches, etc., etc.

May 13. D.D. [Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton] said Mrs. McKenna had told her McKenna was sure war with Germany could not be staved off for four years, far less for twelve as someone had suggested.

June 28. Jenny in bed. I was talking about S.'s speech (on Woman Suffrage) and, arguing laughingly, said that women had best do first what their fathers and then what their husbands advise them. "No," said Jenny, "they ought to be independent, like the United States of America!"

July 4. Wilfrid Ward spoke of Newman's great desire, (1) to submit to authority absolutely; (2) to persuade authority not to interfere with thought. He said once in a letter: "The fact is, thought is no longer allowed in the Church"; and in another he said, after the Vatican Council: "Councils have always done harm." This rather shocked Zulueta, the R.C. Fellow of New College who was there.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Francis Pember, later Warden of All Souls' College, Oxford.

<sup>2</sup> Later Sir Norman Moore. President of the Royal College of Physicians.

1910

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

20, Egerton Gardens, S.W.

January 1, 1910

MY DEAR FRANK,

. . . It is very interesting to see how European art has suffered by the intrusions of science and the corresponding exaggeration of the desire for *representation* in art, to the comparative disappearance of the other two ideas which go to make great art, the idea of symbolizing thought, and the idea of order in beauty. This is a rough restatement of some sentences by Roger Fry in an article on Binyon's<sup>1</sup> book,<sup>2</sup> which is to be in the January *Quarterly*.

. . . I have just been a journey in the Tube and it has been made much pleasanter by your charming little Ronsard which I read by the way. Very many thanks for it and for your two letters—you know how much they are always appreciated. Will you suffer from vanity if I tell you that I took an old one of yours out two nights ago—one of 1908—and read it to Sarah after dinner—and very good company we found it. It preceded our Browning, so you will like your neighbour! We have been reading some of the old things lately, and I have *never* enjoyed them so much before. The “young” critics say Browning is dead. One can only reply—they'll be dead first, if they ever come alive. Last night we read *Ivan Ivanovitch* which I don't believe I have ever looked at since W. E. Russell

<sup>1</sup> Laurence Binyon, C.H. Later Keeper of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum.

<sup>2</sup> Probably *Painting in the Far East*.

read it to Hughes and me at Haileybury—one of the first poems that ever excited me. It's quite good, but it won't do after *Up in a Villa down in the City*, and still less after *Evelyn Hope* and *One Word More* and *Memorabilia*, and the *Soliloquy in a Spanish Cloister*, which were also among our readings—a motley crew but all wonderful stuff—especially the first two.

Fancy your not knowing *The Hound of Heaven*—about the finest purely Christian poem ever written, don't you think? And there are others very good, e.g., *The Dead Cardinal*, and indeed all the religious poems. No one has ever got into poetry more of the Augustinian sense of the urgency of God claiming the human soul, as I said in *Lit. Sup.* when I wrote on the *Selected Poems* a year and a half ago. But he has not a very large range—and I think I overpraised him a bit.

From Rev. F. G. Ellerton

*The Vicarage,  
Ellesmere, Salop  
January 3, 1910*

. . . Well, but Keats. What I mean to express is that his genius is such an unaided one. "He was the first that ever burst" into his "perilous seas". Of course Shelley too, but somehow different. One cannot see any ancestry, any origin, any *milieu* out of which the *Ode to the Nightingale* springs except the soul of Keats—at that moment kindled to the highest pitch of inspiration by Fanny Brawne. He writes that and other things, wakes out of his trance, and proceeds to reel off pages of bad puns and a foot or two of doggerel verse. That is inspiration. With Shelley his unerring, elfin, *unhuman* life was all part and parcel with his writing. Do I make myself clear? And are you still awake? This, Sir, is the penalty for calling me "bellettristic". Well some day, when a Philistine in a Riviera hotel salon has bored you to extinction by talking of the motor boat races at Monaco or somewhere, you may kindly tell me your views quite

briefly. I incline to think that K., if he had lived, might have grown and done something quite different and quite great. He wanted to write dramas—was driving at that.

But enough of Johnny Keats to the sitter in the chair of Gifford. No, of course, Mr. Editor, I was not annoyed, but I like to get a *gentle rise* out of so eminent a man (Keats again, a pun, a pun). It really is amusing, though, to read the truculent criticisms of your predecessor and of *Blackwood*. I am not sure that it would not be well to slaughter a batch of Minor Poets who clearly are *not* Keatses, in that sort of style. And even greater ferociousness might well be expended on the Marie Corellis (if you know the name) of this world.

Ah! *The Hound of Heaven*. You put it well. What strikes me at first—and I suppose everybody, in the extraordinary—yes, I must say it, *cleverness* of the imagery and the manner in which it is sustained. He is, to my mind, in the same relation to his feeling of repentance as A.T. was in *In Mem.* to his grief. It isn't poured *straight* out of Thompson's soul. Therefore, to me it is not a *great religious* poem. That it is exceedingly true is obvious. But compare it with the *Dream of Gerontius*. That is a great religious poem without question, I suppose. But I don't find at present the same tone in *The Hound of Heaven*. Why! the title is itself too much a literary title . . . I must, however, read more of F.T.

Looking at your letter makes me really smile. I think I could unearth an old one of yours which spoke in a very different strain of R.B. To think it is twenty years ago last Friday that I stood in the fog in the Abbey and heard the lovely boys' voices pierce it with Bridge's setting of *He giveth His beloved sleep*. Of the rest I could see little, only afterwards there was the little, very grey, spectacled, eager figure of Dean Bradley hurrying back in velvet skull-cap, cassock and Bath ribbon and jewel still round his neck, to give some order. That was R.B.'s funeral. You spoke in different strains in those days, being then chiefly enamoured of Mr. Pope, Gray, and coming

to Tennyson. Now, now, don't be excited. But, really, you were a classic first and only a romanticist afterwards.

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Grand Hotel Splendide,  
Portofino Mare  
April 25, 1910

Your justly indignant post card met me here on our arrival two days ago! But you know you pay the penalty of your genius! If you write such letters as you do, and this last was one of the best in my collection, you take all the courage out of your poor correspondents! Anyhow, you know a bolder man than I might wait for an absolutely free day before he tackled the high subjects you propound, and as you always insist on dictating my subjects to me, I am to write on Keats or on some new painter or writer or whatever happens to arouse the interest of your alert and enquiring Reverence. . . . So there—enough of apology; we must write when we can and when the spirit of letter writing moves us—and with you that really ought to be once a month! Why not make it what our insolent neo-Catholic, demi-Roman Bertram Talbot calls “that high Protestant festival, the first Sunday in the month?” . . . I see you ask for a book to launch you on to Byron—I don't know one except the old two which launched me in old days—Nichol's book in the *Men of Letters* and Mat. Arnold's Introduction. I still think Mat. over valued him greatly, but it is a striking fact that to this day he is, after Shakespeare, *the only* English poet who is popular on the Continent. The literary read Shelley or Keats, but the great demi-literary public seems to know something of Byron.

I noticed the other day in a German book an advertised library of the world's classics: and the only two English poets were Shakespeare and Byron. And there *was* a good deal in him, there *was*, I think, that “splendid and imperishable excellence of his sincerity and strength”. The foreigner doesn't feel what we feel—his detestably

dressing-gown English; the sort of English you would write if you dashed your poems off while you dressed for dinner, as he boasted he did. You can't learn him by heart because you can always substitute half a dozen words which are just as good as his—whereas Milton or Tennyson you either forget altogether or remember exactly—you can't possibly fancy any other word would do. But, given all this, and given the disagreeable element of the vulgar aristocrat that there was in him—the insolence and vulgarity of mind which Trelawny says always stood shamed and humbled into respect in Shelley's presence—there still was an *amazing* power and abundance of mind in the man. I have lately read most of *Don Juan*. In spite of its beautiful things it leaves an ultimate taste of the dust and ashes of the disillusion that lies in wait for egoism and materialism and mere cleverness—but what *cleverness*, and more than cleverness there is! There is nothing he cannot get into verse—the most audacious *tours de force* come easy to him: and his wealth of description is stupendous. No one in English but Shakespeare could have done the long shipwreck in the Second Canto. You feel he is like Shakespeare, absolutely inexhaustible.

Two other points you raise. I can't see how you can compare *Dream of Gerontius* with *Hound of Heaven*. I don't think the *Dream* a great religious poem at all: the religion is there but not the great poetry. With Christina it is different. I get to think more of her: feminine influence perhaps, or clerical (F.G.E.)? but hers is real poetry though very limited in range and almost uniformly depressing and wanting in life.

To W. W. Vaughan

20, Egerton Gardens, S.W.  
Christmas Day, 1910

MY DEAR WILL,

... I expect you'll have a very happy and merry Christmas, as we have—not made any the less so by the extraordinary brightness and beauty of the day. We went out



early to church and the paling moon was so clear that we could see the rough edges of the earth's shadow on her: and after breakfast the sun turned me out of my chair, and in the middle of the day we all had a delightfully sunny walk in the Park. The children were wildly excited over Christmas and greeted us when we returned to breakfast with loud shrieks of "Hooray, Hooray, it's Christmas Day," and so got to presents, and have been very happy ever since—they have never been so entirely well as these last two months.

*From the Diary*

March 7. Dined Literary Society. Pember was very worthy of H. Fisher's excellent reply to the question why the Americans made such a great fuss of the Bishop of London. "Because the Bishop is *anima naturaliter Americana!*"

March 12. Twins interrupted my lingering breakfast with clamours of *Horatius*; and then delighted me by interrupting the reading with cries of excitement: "They are still here, aren't they, Daddy?" And then: "The bridge is down! The bridge is down!"

September 15. Went to lecture by Sir Ernest Shackleton on his South Pole Expedition in evening. In an age which is drunk with self-pity there are still men who do not pity themselves.

October 17. Travelled to Glasgow—a most heavenly day; unforgettable views of the birches shining golden in the sunlight—one of the most beautiful journeys in the world.

November 8. Dined Literary Society. Had good talk with Norman Moore about Swift and Cowper. He told me he met an old Miss Throckmorton at Lady Seafield's in Scotland, and was anxious to see whether she knew anything of the family poet. But his anxieties were soon

set at rest, for after his arrival he happened to ask her whether she had had a sleeping-berth from London, to which the reply was: "Oh no! Although on pleasure bent I am of frugal mind."

November 10. Talked of literature, and of the great position a man of letters as such had in the eighteenth century, *e.g.* Pope and Johnson—seen in the Scotch tour particularly—and the poor position held now. The answer we gave on the whole was that no man of letters great enough to command respect was now living. Strachey said he had seen many people uncover before Meredith at a meeting in Sussex.

November 17. Reading Walter Headlam's *Life* all the evening and wishing I had given my life altogether to Greek poetry.

1911

*To his Wife*

34, *Queen's Gate Gardens, S.W.*  
*March 5, 1911*

... I got a note from Mrs. Johnson<sup>1</sup> with this very nice little letter from Hamilton enclosed—he is a saint, I think. I wish he could make me a steady and settled Christian, seeing my way and following it as far as human weakness allows. But I don't think I could ever accept—I hope not merely from worldliness, love of pleasure and self—that purely ecclesiastical view of life in which all occupations that are not prayer or praise or acts of religion are taken to be almost of the nature of sin and at any rate unimportant and essentially uneternal. I want a religion that will include Seymour Haden giving his day to his etchings as well as a priest giving his to his church and his people. However, that is an old subject on which you and I have talked before, and I begin not to expect clear light upon it in this life. . . . Then Jenny and I had breakfast and were very happy and they did their Scripture with me and I gave them a little talk on the meaning of abstinence and the nature of temptation.

... Then to the Park, in fear of rain—rejoicing in the coming almond blossom and the ruddy elm flowers already making colour up in the trees.

But there was no rain and we were very happy and met Ronnie and Florrie and got home safe—and then I wrote to you and had luncheon and read H. Walpole and—and—and—slept! and am hardly awake now!

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Cowper Johnson, wife of John's intimate friend, Canon Johnson. The "Hamilton" referred to was her son, who had become a Cowley Father.

To W. W. Vaughan

*The Dower House*<sup>1</sup>

Ufford, Suffolk

September 18, 1911

... We have had my old friend Frank Ellerton and his most delightful wife and children here—first squeezed into this little house for a week, then in lodgings close by. And he and I had some pleasant mornings reading Horace and Homer. He is a good instance of a man who has kept the torch burning for nearly thirty years without ever a neighbour or friend to help him. He was a scholar of Hertford in my day.

It is good of you to ask after my doings and good for me to have a second conscience in you. No, I have begun nothing. These weeks have been busy with the proofs of my book which is now ready to come out, and the proofs of the essay I wrote for the English Association on *The Grand Style* . . . . The book will be out in a week or two. It is to be called *Poets and Poetry*. They would not agree to *Thursdays and Fridays* which was what I wanted. The other essay will come out in good company with A. C. Bradley on Jane Austen, etc.

... This letter is already so long that I don't know whether I have time to embark on the big questions you raised or whether you would have time to read if I did. My own private big question first of all. You are quite right to keep prodding at me—and you do it so generously—I am very grateful even for the blindness of your affection, though such a great word as “wisdom” applied to my poor weak self gives me a curious start. I do want to get deeper—as you say: but it is difficult, as I suppose all things worth doing are. When I had all day and every day to myself at Tanfield Court nobody wanted me or my advice. Now National Trust, C.O.S., “Scapa”, English Association, etc., all take up more and more time: and one side of me pleads hard for giving them more and more. They are all doing work which I thoroughly believe in.

<sup>1</sup> A house we had taken for the summer holidays.

and I can see that my help *is* of some use. The sale of my books has hitherto been so discouraging—the French poets have not reached three hundred yet, I think—that it isn't easy to gather courage for writing anything big, though the willingness of the Clarendon Press to take these essays has encouraged me a good deal. And when I read them over I do feel that slight as they are they are an expression of the best that is in me—more than I can put into any form of business or external work. And I do get such encouraging letters from people who read my things—often people who don't the least know who they are writing to but write “c/o Editor of *Times*”—that one feels one is helping some people to enjoy and use that from which one has oneself got one's best use and enjoyment. So I shall try to write when I get settled back to London. Here I have written nothing but a few more verse translations of Carducci. Courtney is going to publish three in the *Fortnightly*, and I may ask the Clarendon Press to print a volume of them. I should like to make Carducci better known—that would take a lot of work. If not that, I shall probably *try* some such book as I talked over with you, or a short history of English poetry which would aim at being as like Mackail's *Latin Literature* as possible. What do you think?

But here is too much about myself. At least I don't know. Your sympathy and interest and stimulus have never failed me and I think such friends as you and I cannot pour *themselves* out too freshly to each other. . . . Meanwhile I must leave public affairs for another letter. I was finishing the *Excursion* yesterday, and it was curious to see in the last book how the wise old man (though he wasn't old in years then) felt a hundred years ago what troubles must arise from the “injustice that hath made so wide a difference between man and man”. And that is true. And we have got to mend it. But I am sure it can only be mended slowly, and will not be mended by teaching people to expect advantages from breaking their contracts without notice, and using tyranny and violence

towards those who wish to observe theirs!<sup>1</sup> It is all very difficult, but I am sure that the sense of law-abidingness is about the greatest of all gains humanity has slowly acquired, and that even a better distribution of wealth would be dearly purchased by its loss.

*From George Trevelyan*

*2, Cheyne Gardens, S.W.*

*October 23, 1911*

DEAR JOHN,

Thank you very much for your two letters.

The first in particular gave me the greatest pleasure. There is a particular propriety in my dedicating this little volume<sup>2</sup>—slight though it is—to you, because the sort of attitude to literature and life which it represents, the love of poetry in particular, not as unrelated to ethics, to history, and to public affairs, is the thing that binds you and me together—a thing we both stand for in the world, in our small way. And as it is a world that cares a great deal less for poetry than it used—or at least than it ought to—it draws us together a good deal. This opinion, as to the value of poetry as a criticism of life, on which we agree, is to me *at least* as important *quâ* opinion as other opinions on which I agree with others of my friends more than with you. The subject is perhaps more vital than the Parliament Bill!

Yours ever,

G.M.T.

*From Mary Cholmondeley*<sup>3</sup>

*2, Leonard Place,  
Kensington, W*

*November 5, 1911*

DEAR JOHN,

Your letter is delightful, and I am proud to own your

<sup>1</sup> Alluding to the railway strike.

<sup>2</sup> An anthology called *English Songs of Italian Freedom*.

<sup>3</sup> Author of *Red Pottage*, *Diana Tempest*, and other novels.

book. This is "a cross" which in your case I feel I can easily bear.<sup>1</sup>

But where I see or think I detect that rare thing originality then I always have an intense wish to force it to exert itself unaided, especially in youth. We had an old cook once who always prefaced the ordering of dinner by remarking: "You can't make somethink out of nothink."

That is what I really want of you and Percy Lubbock and a very few others—that you *should* make "somethink out of nothink" because I feel so sure the power, the creative power, is there, and how rare it is.

Yours sincerely,

MARY CHOLMONDELEY

*From the Diary*

January 1. Read Bishop King's beautiful letters: full of the old piety, personal religion, holiness, as opposed to the modern substitutes of organization, Church work, social religion, and the rest.

March 22. Impossible and absurd as the suggestion is,<sup>2</sup> such is my incurable amateurishness that the idea worried and persecuted me all day—not as a possibility, of course, but as a thought of what might have been if I had been a more whole-hearted Christian. It is just as I feel when I look at Greek art. I feel I wish I had given my life to its study; and so to politics sometimes—and other things.

May 26. Golf with Algernon Cecil.<sup>3</sup> He told me a curious story of Sir W. Harcourt saying to John Morley—I suppose about 1896 or 1897: "What are you doing now?" "Well, don't you know I am writing the 'old man's' life?" "Oh, my boy, you are not the man for that! You can't write on his religion because you don't believe it;

<sup>1</sup> *Poets and Poetry*.

<sup>2</sup> A proposal made to him by Hamilton Johnson (see note to letter of March 5) that he should take Orders.

<sup>3</sup> Algernon Cecil, younger son of Lord and Lady Eustace Cecil. Author of *Six Oxford Thinkers*, *Life of Robert Cecil*, *First Earl of Salisbury*, *British Foreign Secretaries*, and other works.

his finance because you don't know anything about it; you can't on his Home Rule because you know too much about that!"

April 30. Finished reading *The Card* by Arnold Bennett. I am amazed at his reputation. The book is great rubbish; clever rubbish of course; but no joy, no sorrow in it; no passion, no emotion; no human—nor any other sort of—nature, and least of all any poetry. The man is a clever, cold, shallow journalist.



1912

*From the Diary*

March 10. To church at Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, where the Dean of St. Paul's preached on the [coal] strike; reluctantly he said, for it was hard to steer between partisanship and platitude, though easy to hold the scales even if one puts nothing of weight into either!

March 30. With S. to see the Futurists. They are immensely clever, especially Buccioni, but they don't realize that it is vain to try to express *successive* impressions in a picture. They should read Lessing; what they want to do can only be done by poetry or music.

May 29. Finished *Old Wives' Tale*. It is difficult to put down, but totally without any distinction—any *largeness* of either matter or manner. It is like a newspaper report of an exciting story; no thought, or not much; no poetry at all; not a single phrase with any music in it.<sup>1</sup>

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Hagley Hall,<sup>2</sup>

Stourbridge

July 22, 1912

MY DEAR FRANK,

. . . We came here on Saturday and return to-morrow, the chief object of our visit being to bring Jenny to see her mother's old home. . . . I spent the morning reading

<sup>1</sup> Henry James described *Hilda Lessways* to me as the "slow squeezing out of a very dirty sponge." S.K.B.

<sup>2</sup> The home of my half-brother, Lord Cobham, where we were then staying.

Johnson's *Life of Cowley* in preparation for my final chapter on *Johnson's Works*; and then looking over some of Cowley's poems in the old 1693 folio in the library—a much pleasanter task than I expected. Really some of them are very good, and all give you the impression of a man with no ordinary mind—very well read but also the master of his reading. It is interesting to read the very first poem—and to feel how natural it was for Johnson to like it: it expresses so well the feelings of struggling genius determined to emerge, which no one knew more of than he. The library here is very pleasant, and I wish you were in it with me at this moment. Mr. Pope looks down from above the chimney piece, with his big dog Bounce, by J. Richardson: Thomson, who was often here, is over the door, by one Patoun: the picture which Chatham said was “beastly like”: West, the translator of Pindar, close by: marble busts of Homer, Milton, Dryden, etc., over the bookcases: and a fine marble plaque of old Sam Rogers on one of the walls. Besides these delights, many delectable folios and quartos in the shelves: a Shakespeare folio, the beautiful Baskerville Ariosto and other Baskervilles, etc., etc., all very proudly and lovingly cared for by their present owner, who is a bibliophil and collector in a modest way—so far as anyone not an American can be nowadays. Altogether not a bad place, you will agree, for a wet afternoon—or perhaps for a letter to the last of the belle-lettristic parsons! . . . I shall probably be back alone in London for a fortnight about August 20 to try to finish my abominable little book<sup>1</sup> which I have been struggling and failing with. I have so little to say that has not been said a hundred times, and though I love quoting the old stories it is troublesome work fitting in the transitions from one to another so that all may seem natural.

. . . By the way, I have bought a new picture, an oil by David Muirhead, which you must come and see in the autumn. It was in the English Art Club show. There

<sup>1</sup> The book referred to was *Dr. Johnson and his Circle*, published in the Home University Library.

was a very good show at the Fine Arts Club of Renaissance Sculpture, including two lovely Cellinis. The catalogue was by Maclagan, son of the old Archbishop—I wish you'd get a City Living worth £2,000 a year.

*Châlet Martin Pécheur,<sup>1</sup>*

*To Rev. F. G. Ellerton*

*Wimereux,*

*Pas de Calais*

*August 13, 1912*

. . . Meanwhile we have been browsing pleasantly in all sorts of books—amongst them re-reading your copy of *Hundred Best French Poems*. Oh, and Anatole France's admirable *Les Dieux ont Soif*. You ought to read that: it is a thing over which one lingers to *goûter les phrases*—exquisitely written and very exciting. French Revolution—of course with his usual dispassionate outside on-looking, as of a Lucretian god. There is as always a pleasant sceptic who makes friends with an excellent priest with whom he has much talk, and the priest's reply to him is not one of the worst things in the book. "I can't discuss the Christian religion with you. *J'ai trop de raisons et trop peu d'esprit*." I have also been reading a most excellent book on evolutionary Biology by one Dendy—very plainly written so that even I can understand, and very interesting. . . . You were very kind and comforting about Johnson. I hope it will pass muster, but I am sure it will not do more. There is much more that I care to say in some of my *Times* things or in this Grand Style essay than in all this little book. I hate and despise the originality of paradox (I hate also using paradox in this false sense—but it is now apparently universal); and I cannot attain to any other originality on this well-worn topic. . . . You shall certainly pin-prick if you will when you come to London, if you don't find anything more amusing to do—and I will listen respectfully and gratefully.

<sup>1</sup> A house near Boulogne which we had taken for the summer holidays.

1912]

ON JOHNSON

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From Mr. Herbert Fisher

37, Norham Road,  
Oxford

September 15, 1912

MY DEAR JOHN,

I have just finished reading your book<sup>1</sup> and cannot lose a moment before writing to tell you how very good I think it. It strikes me as a beautiful book, so wise, tender and perceptive and full of good things delicately said. And you have certainly given your readers a rich banquet of *Johnsonism*. In a word I do not see how the book could possibly have been better done, and I should think the worse, and very much the worse, of the critics if they do not agree with me. I think that you have brought out the depth, strength and solemnity of Johnson's character with very great skill, and given, what is so difficult to give, a real living sense of his greatness and humanity to your readers. If you are not already a member of The Club you should be elected by acclamation.

Yours ever,

HERBERT FISHER.

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Hôtel de l'Europe,  
Lille

September 18, 1912

MY DEAR FRANK,

Well, you *were* energetic to write to me in the middle of your arduous Sunday! You are a wonderful person, and I admire the enthusiasm which makes so much of your few hours in London. Only did Serena die of it, I almost ask? She is certainly right in thinking you ought to manage to get nearer to London. So very few people really *care* for art as you do that they all ought if possible to get within reach of the treasures of which they alone can make

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Johnson and his Circle.

perfect use. I have no right to talk about the Christian life, least of all to a priest, but I feel constantly something of what you allude to, the contrast between these intense pleasures—which are more and better and higher, though, than your “lust of the eye”—and the severity or apparent severity of the New Testament. . . . Somehow or other I suppose we have got to “lose our life” and “take up our cross”, and yet not make the fatal mistake of the ascetic ideal which was certainly not our Lord’s, and which has several times so nearly made Christianity responsible for a bankruptcy of science, art, thought, and civilization. For that the only secret, no doubt, is the difficult and great one of knowing Christ after the Spirit. One hopes that the light will shine, but for me the reconciliation is often very hard and distant. We must have, and ought to have, a material, intellectual, and æsthetic life: and for none of the three does the New Testament seem to care much. Yet the supreme unprovable certainty of faith is, as Inge says, that the Ultimate is a Union of Infinite Goodness, Truth, and Beauty, in which the Three are one and perfectly harmonized, each indeed being a different light of the other, and God being each and all. We feel assured of these high things in our best moments, but it is hard to *live* them in the workshop, and perhaps still more at the dinner table or in the easy chair. . . . I somehow have written all this in a strain with which I think I can say I have never troubled you before, all on the text of your innocent “What a pagan I am”! . . . The Church is evidently very strong here: bookshops full of clerical pamphlets, and books of devotion, and notices about retreats, etc. One wonders how that struggle will all end; not, I think, in the victory of the blackguards who are trying to expel from Lille the Little Sisters of the Poor; but not in the victory of the obscurantism of Pius X either, I think. We have yet got to await some great man who will work out, for the Church of Rome especially, a *reasonable* faith, and the “reasonable service” which, for St. Paul, went with it.

We go back to-morrow and to London on Friday week. I shall be very glad to see my home again, and shall be very busy with proofs almost at once. To my great relief and honest surprise Fisher writes with the greatest enthusiasm of Johnson saying he cannot imagine how it could have been better done, and other pleasant things. I *can* imagine very well what he can't: and, pleased as I naturally am, I am sure he thinks far better of it than it deserves or I shall ever think.

*From the Diary*

March 4. Longman<sup>1</sup> came in the morning. He told me some curious stories. Dizzy had him down to Hughenden to stay the night *tête à tête* with him, before *Endymion* was printed. Longman went, rather shy of course, and D. opened dinner by saying: "Now, Mr. Longman, we will be two gentlemen at a club," which Longman was quick enough to see meant "Don't talk for the sake of talking." So there was silent soup and silent fish. Then talk began somehow, and continued for the rest of the evening. After dinner they came to business, and D., who was very mysterious and secret about *Endymion*, sent the servants to bed, telling them first to light Mr. Longman's room. Then he produced from locked recesses the red despatch-boxes of the MS. and they two carried the packets up to Longman's room, which they found lighted with fourteen candles—Dizzy having a great love of illumination. "How can you carry the MS to London?" said D. "Oh, in my *Gladstone* bag," young L. nearly replied, but just in time avoided the fatal name. "But where is your bag?" They could not find it, and D. would not have the servants called, so Longman remembers the curious scene of his young self and the venerable statesman groping about, looking under the bed and in cupboards till they found the bag in an adjoining room.

April 13. Finished (Wells's) *Marriage*: as good as a book can be which is not aware that there has been any great

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Norton Longman, the publisher.

literature in the world; his style is the least distinguished I ever read.

May 13. WITTERSHAM HOUSE, WITTERSHAM [where we were staying with my half-brother, Alfred Lyttelton, and his wife]. Much delightful talk. Alfred is not the best, but the most charming talker and giver and taker of talk I know. He told some good stories. As an extreme instance of Herbert Paul's intellectual insolence (with which Alfred and I felt all the sympathy in the world), when a man talked for ever about machinery and its wonders, he looked up and said: "I thank God I was educated at Eton and Oxford, and have no idea why the water comes out of the pump!"

May 27. Dinner of Royal Literary Fund, where old Lord Morley spoke beautifully, a reminiscence of his youthful hopes and pleasures, and a summing up of the lessons of a life divided between literature and politics. Both he and Lord Curzon denied that poverty was really a stimulus to genius, though neither oddly enough mentioned the Greeks, the strongest of all proofs that competition does not, as Morley asserted, extinguish genius.

July 5. WINDEBROWE,<sup>1</sup> KESWICK—In the middle of the morning came the sad telegram saying that Alfred had died in the night. . . . The man of most personal charm I have ever known. I always found his charm absolutely irresistible, and loved being with him.

July 10. Ellison of Windsor writes to Sybil [Cust]. "One star differeth from another in glory; but wherever Alfred's is there must be a glory greater than that given to most men."

July 20. Much talk with Hadow on all sorts of subjects all day long. He is a most brilliant stimulating person, more and more convincingly anti-democratic: thinks we shall have a Socialist Ministry before twenty years are out and then, after a disastrous six months or a year, we shall be delivered from these follies. In the street

<sup>1</sup> A house in the Lake District which we took for several months in the summer of this year.



in Keswick he said to me: "There are three adjectives that have had a devastating effect on English life during the last generation: *new*; *quick*; *cheap*." A true saying.

July 27. Sat in the garden reading De la Mare's delightful *Listeners*—more sense of the beauty and mystery of things, especially the "silence and the calm", than any poet since Wordsworth.

July 28. At 12.20 a.m. we started up Skiddaw; S., Miss Scott [our children's governess], Adams [our butler], to see the sun rise. There was a young moon just up and a galaxy of stars. It was very hot at first and gradually got cooler, till the hour we spent on the top—3.15 to 4.15 a.m.—was quite cold. . . . It was quite clear on the top, but the amazing thing was that by the time we got to the top all the valley of Derwentwater and Bassenthwaite was covered with a very deep, very white mist, and this had the most extraordinary appearance. It looked like a field of driven irregular snow, or a glacier; but what it was most like was a sea of white foaming waves tossing high against the rocks that rose black out of it. At times we could have sworn it was the sea, supernaturally whitened and with its waves suddenly crystallized into immobility. They seemed to hang over the rocks, i.e. the hills, that rose out of the mists, as if stayed in the act of breaking and falling. It was one of the strangest sights I ever saw. Yet another strange sight was the rising of Venus about 2.30. First we saw a large diffused light on the edge of the eastern shoulder of Skiddaw, like that of a rising moon, and in a moment Venus came up, looking enormous. By this time other stars were fast fading in the increasing light, and it was curious to see Venus gradually get smaller till she became invisible about 4.30 when the sun was high up. The horizon was covered with a bank of cloud at sunrise, but the sun, sending splendid shoots and streaks of gold and purple before him, got well up by 4.15 and shone on us as we went down till the valley mist received us and hid him from our eyes.

August 15. Lectured on La Fontaine [to a "refresher"]

course of elementary school teachers at Oxford]. Nervous as I was, I was greatly relieved by the largeness of the audience, about 450 Matheson thought, and their evident pleasure shown by frequent applause.

October 12. LOTUS, DORKING [where we were staying with Mr. and Mrs. Wilfrid Ward]. Ward told us many stories of Manning after his—W. Ward's—first visit to Newman; he was rather silent at first, and then, after a pause: "Wilfrid, I hear you have been at Birmingham: shall I tell you what has been the ruin of that man? *Temper; temper; temper!*" He gives a wonderful mimicry of Manning's voice, not that I ever heard it, but it is very vivid.

October 16. Dined Bernard Mallets: met Miss Gertrude Bell, who told the curious story which she had heard from Marie de Bunsen—who was one of the Empress Frederick's ladies—that on being dismissed Bismarck spent the morning with his family, using very violent language. He then went to the Emperor to give up the official seal or whatever it is, and then (strangely, as I think, but I have heard the fact from other sources) drove to see the Empress Frederick, to whom he expatiated at length and very bitterly on the way he had been treated. Whereupon the Empress said: "*Aber lieber Prinz, wer hat ihm diese Undankbarkeit gelehrt?*" (But, dear Prince, who taught him this ingratitude?)

Lady Victoria Russell told me a story heard from Lord Rothschild, of Dizzy asked by some Liberal Minister about the right method of dealing with and resisting Royal solicitations or Royal advice. He replied: "I always listen: I never contradict; but I seldom remember." Or, I *think* she said: "I invariably forget."

November 25. To hear Colvin lecture on Stevenson; some charming touches, e.g. the picture of him walking with S.C. from Hampstead to Burlington House in the unwonted costume of top hat and overcoat, carrying the hat in his hand, down Regent Street; and, being just then

full of Milton, shouting: "As Teneriffe or Atlas unremoved," or the "just men made perfect" in a broad Scotch accent. The description of his talk and presence which fascinated all except the "hidebound conventionals" and young diplomats: of his total failure to make the London police take him for a vagabond, or the foreign take him for anything else: of his courage in protecting the weak, as in taking a kitten from a big Danish bulldog whom everybody else was afraid of.

From Mr. Arthur Balfour

4, Carlton Gardens,  
Pall Mall, S.W.

June 4, 1913

MY DEAR MR. BAILEY,

Mrs. Talbot,<sup>1</sup> I think, mistook what I said to her about your *Johnson*. I only began it in her house, and though I was delighted with the beginning, I should not have ventured to pronounce an opinion upon the work before I had finished it. What I did praise, with unstinted approval, was your volume of criticisms republished from the *Times Literary Supplement*.<sup>2</sup>

As for *Johnson*, it seems to me to be quite admirable. To say that it is good reading is nothing, for nobody yet has succeeded in being dull when writing about Johnson and Boswell. But it has much higher qualities—critical, literary, and biographical, than that of merely providing entertainment; and you are to be congratulated upon it.

I rather wondered whether, in discussing Johnson's prose, you were right to omit all reference to his review of Soame Jenyns. I have not read it for more years than I like to think of, but, in my recollection, it seems to be raised above the habitual level of his or any one else's prose by the same intensity of emotion which puts the *Vanity of Human Wishes* in a place by itself.

Yours sincerely,

ARTHUR BALFOUR.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Edward Talbot.

<sup>2</sup> *Poets and Poetry*, published 1911.

To Wilfrid Ward

Windebrowe,  
Keswick  
July 10, 1913

MY DEAR WILFRID,

I should have written to you before but for these dreadfully sad events.<sup>1</sup> Sarah and I loved Mrs. Ward's letter and sympathy. I expect she has written. We hurried to London on Monday and got back late last night—and long journey as it was I would not have been away for a great deal. I loved Alfred from the first day I knew him and indeed I am not strange in that. I do not think Doll Liddell<sup>2</sup> greatly exaggerated when he said to me at the funeral, "It is by far the greatest social calamity that has happened in my time." I always found his charm absolutely irresistible and I am glad to remember that I was enjoying it in its full power at Wittersham only a few weeks before he died. We have all, of course, taken a sad pleasure in the universality of the affection and sorrow: the scenes at St. Margaret's and at Lord's were, I suppose, strictly speaking without any precedent. And it is good to think that that wonderful fascination—though it belonged to a man who was no more perfect than other people—yet was exercised one may say entirely for good; I think Curzon *had* the right to say no one was ever anything but the better for knowing Alfred, and what higher and more hopeless wish can any of us have for ourselves than that?

One's heart is full as I write all this, but I meant to write about your charming memoirs which I greatly enjoyed reading. You have a wonderful gift of biography and it is evidently all going to be very interesting. You bring it all out so vividly, especially the two curious pictures of your father's "one-ideaded-ness" and the result of it in your own strange childhood—the entirely religious

<sup>1</sup> The death of Alfred Lyttelton. <sup>2</sup> The late Adolphus Liddell, C.B.

character of your games, etc. Your father *lives* in these two stories of his hatred of the landlord's life and duties and of his humorous defence of going to the opera! All you say of your childhood makes me recall my own—which was unlike yours in every possible way except that owing to my mother's great piety, and death when I was only nine, religion took an immensely strong hold on us, and we loved to preach to each other and fancied ourselves dying, and held special services in that belief, etc. Nor shall I ever forget the services we three boys, aged 11, 9, 7, held by ourselves during my mother's last illness. They were most sincere and, if a little morbid, did us I think more good than harm. Your amusing poem, too, on Sabbatarianism comes home to me—for we were very Sabbatarian—and I still retain a good many feelings dating from that training which indeed have become convictions. Sabbatarianism was often ugly, narrow and even cruel, but I am sure the loss of strictness in trying to make one day in the week a day of the soul, and not, like the others, mainly of the body, is a loss and not a gain. To this day I believe in "Sunday books", though my interpretation of the phrase is, of course, not my mother's.

Yours ever,

JOHN BAILEY

*From Sir Edmund Gosse*

*House of Lords,*

*S.W.1*

*December 11, 1913*

MY DEAR MR. BAILEY,

How kind of you to like my screed about Anatole France. I also could not go to the Dinner, and for a reason that may amuse you. The Poet Laureate<sup>1</sup> has been staying with us, and as he had never met or even seen the Prime Minister,<sup>2</sup> I got the latter to come and dine

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Robert Bridges.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Asquith.

quietly for that purpose. The two got on like a house on fire, and afterwards the Poet Laureate said with enchanting *naïveté*, "I think I was a success—don't you?" You did him a singularly good turn by your article, strengthening the P.M.'s hands.

Yours very sincerely,  
EDMUND GOSSE.

1914

*The Falmouth Hotel,  
Falmouth  
January 13, 1914*

MY DEAR WILFRID,

I am very much ashamed that another letter from you should reach me this morning before I have thanked you for the one you wrote about Spencer's<sup>1</sup> death. It was one of the very truest—if I may say so—we received, and one of those that gave us most the feeling which is what one longs for on these occasions—that he was really understood. Such a "*bon camarade*, so straight"—that is exactly what it was: and though he seemed to do so little for people of the ordinary kind of things people do for each other, yet his affection was so obvious and his interest and sympathy with what one was doing or suffering—so quick and visible that he won far more love from his friends than people who would appear to do much more for them.

... I think we may have the happiness of feeling that Spencer played the particular part he was called upon to play in life very well indeed. It was not one of the very showy parts: but I heard last summer that the captain of one of the ships he was always going those voyages on, had said—when he heard Spencer was *not* coming that time: "I'm sorry Mr. Lyttelton is not coming. There's always a better tone on board when he comes—" Who could ask a better epitaph? And it was made before death

<sup>1</sup> Spencer Lyttelton.

came to tempt people, as it always does—to say things a little higher than the truth.

. . . We miss him—and long shall—dreadfully. He was so often with us—and was Sarah's very special brother from many years ago. . . .

Yours ever,  
JOHN BAILEY.

To Wilfrid Ward

[date missing,  
probably Autumn] 1914

MY DEAR WILFRID,

Many thanks for the interesting number of the *Dublin*. What you say of Spencer pleases us both and is, I think, exactly true. It is very nice of you to bring in a mention of one who was in no sense a public character. Did I tell you the story of the memorial lamp which Mrs. Gaskell,<sup>1</sup> Lady Brassey,<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Astor<sup>3</sup> and three others of his great women friends put up to his memory in Middlesex Hospital Chapel? He would have been amused himself by what happened. Mrs. Gaskell asked me to put into Latin for them a statement that it was erected to his memory by six friends and begged that I should indicate that they were women. I wrote that the difficulty was that the feminine of *amicus* has a meaning which was neither respectful to them nor in accordance with our dear Spencer's character! She told me that she and Mrs. Astor were much entertained at the idea of making such a posthumous attack on Spencer's spotless reputation; as he also certainly would have been. I dodged the danger by an expansion—*In caram memoriam Spencer Lyttelton posuerunt pro multis quæ eum dilexerunt amicæ sex*. Which I hope was safe. It was dedicated the day before the war broke out!

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Gaskell, C.B.E.

<sup>2</sup> Sybil, Countess Brassey.

<sup>3</sup> Now Viscountess Astor, M.P.



To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Felix Hotel,  
Felixstowe  
April 28, 1914

... I had to give up the *Milton* for the time and I find they are in no hurry; so I shall not take it up again till we return from our trip to Holland and Belgium, whither we go for a fortnight on May 11, as soon as I have dismissed the Balfour meeting of the English Association. We are going first of all to Waterloo, which we have none of us seen, and Algernon Cecil who comes with us is bringing his father, old Lord Eustace, for the first few days, that he may see it. He knew the great Duke pretty well for a young man, as the Duke was a great friend of his mother: and it will be rather interesting to see the battlefield with one who had often spoken to Wellington. Then we see Brussels and from there Ghent, Bruges, and Antwerp—and The Hague, and from it the Dutch places. It ought to be pleasant if only, as A. Cecil writes to me this morning, one can find the heart to fiddle while Rome is burning. The old ordered world in which one was brought up seems to be passing away, and a man of peace and stable ways like me finds the prospect most disquieting. I find myself sometimes half envying those who die, feeling that they at any rate are safe from the troubles that seem to be coming so thick upon us who still live. We woke up here this morning to find a large hotel fifty yards from this burnt to a ruin by these crazy women [suffragettes]. The first time I have seen their folly with my own eyes—a terrible demonstration of how our social system exists by consent and is largely at the mercy of any fool or knave who will risk himself to destroy it. . . . It is a bad business, but you don't care for politics ever, and I care for them less and less; it is positively painful to read the newspaper now—one dreads the depression which follows. And in spite of all these evil outside things we managed to feel very happy and thankful on our wedding day on Sunday—fourteen years certainly of very great

blessings which make one feel pretty unworthy of one's lot, and Rachel getting well fast, and all three such dear children; and then this wonderful sunshine—all the time we have been in the country—and the beauty of the trees and flowers at Wramplingham. The trees all coming out, the wychelms in blossom—I did not know it was blossom before. And the woods really carpeted with primrose and anemone and wood sorrel and bluebell and celandine and cowslip, and the birds singing and building—a lovely little blue tit in a box nest by the house and a kingfisher in a sandpit. After all, politics play a small part in the whole scheme of human life, and the great things, the universal things, sing 'God's in His Heaven, all's right with the world'. (How the Socialists hate R.B. for those lines: as if they were a philosophic denial of the existence of evil!)

Now we go back to London to-day, and I am going to the Academy Dinner on Saturday, which I have never been to before. I hope this horrid crisis won't prevent Asquith going if he meant to. I want to hear him, which I have never done. I have never been asked before and probably owe it to Briton Rivière, whom I see at the Literary and always like.

*To W. W. Vaughan*

*Wramplingham Hall,  
Wymondham, Norfolk*

... How suddenly and awfully the long talked-of horror has come upon us! And except that there is no invasion and so far as one can see no great danger of one, how much worse it has been than one expected! One had no idea how deeply these devils' doctrines of Nietzsche and Treitschke and Bernhardt had got hold of the German mind as a whole—at least all the governing part of it. . . . As the war began I had a long letter from George Trevelyan blaming Grey angrily and desiring that we should keep out. He has always been hostile to the Entente, and feared that our action would only lead to making Russia the arbiter of Europe. To which I answered that my *only*

criticism of the Entente was regret that it could not be definite enough beforehand to make the Germans *certain* that we should support France if attacked. . . . He wrote back that my letter had partly convinced him, and now I am glad to say he writes again to say there is no substantial difference between us, and he is only regretting that he is untrained for anything except writing history.

The position seems horribly critical as far as France goes, but unbroken success (except in America) for centuries has made us believe that all must ultimately go well always with England. It may be a good school for us to go through to have *real* anxiety, fear of poverty, actual serious loss of income, a long and hard struggle welding all parts of the nation together and weaning us all from much that is worst in us.

*To his Wife*

34, *Queen's Gate Gardens, S.W.*  
*December 29, 1914*

My first day's duty<sup>1</sup> has gone off all right. I was a little afraid last night I should have a snow storm to patrol in! It snowed and blew furiously here after dinner, but the morning was clear and bright. I got there at 9.45, received my whistle, truncheon, and badge, paraded and started off with Larken to follow a senior man to our post, which is outside a power station in Holland Park. There we arrived at 10.15 and stayed till we were relieved at 2.20. There is a hut for shelter (one at a time) and two policemen's macintosh capes for us to use if we want them. Our duty is to allow no one to enter the power station who is not known to the caretaker, and I insisted on stopping her son till she acknowledged him! We did all right, walking

<sup>1</sup> The duty was that of Special Constable. His fellow constable, Mr. E. P. Larken, had become one of our intimate friends since he and John had first met on the Fulham Committee of the C.O.S. He and his wife lived partly at Wimereux where we saw much of them in the preceding year. The duty of watching one of the Power Stations (at Lots Road and then at Holland Park) was entrusted to him and John—a duty which, as will be seen, they relieved by much reading aloud to each other of classical and other literature!

up and down discovering many topics literary and other including the Verrall-Statius problem, (he had heard Gerald Balfour and read his paper), and a passage in Virgil which he had been reading at Keswick. To-morrow we are going to take each a pocket Virgil to compare notes! It was rather long and I got tired of talking as I always do: but the talk was very pleasant.

*From the Diary*

March 2. To Literary Society. Archbishop of Canterbury<sup>1</sup> pointing out how strange it is that we know nothing of what must have been the very curious state of affairs produced by selling well-to-do Greeks into slavery after defeat. What use would a fine lady be as a servant? He told also a horrible story told him by an old American lady. She remembered well the constant sight and sound of the whip applied to the slaves in her father's house. She and her sisters had little slave girls given to them as presents, each of the girls having a little whip tied on to her girdle which her little mistress applied when it took her fancy. The wonder was, as the old lady said, that such a system did not make brutes of the girls, but, horrible as he thought it, he believed she had not as a fact been made hard or cruel by it.

May 4. We lunched with Mr. Balfour. . . . The talk went very pleasantly, over argument in verse as illustrated by Dryden, Pope, Browning, etc. He would not have *Prelude* or *Excursion* as reasoning, said they were prophetic utterances, not arguments, in which I felt he was right; but I opposed *In Memoriam* to which he agreed. He had to hurry off to Lansdowne House for a Conference at 2.30. I was struck by his having already read Verrall's book on Dryden, in spite of all the business of the moment. In the evening dined at the Literary, sitting between Colvin and Strachey. There was much talk between us of Keats, Landor, and Dryden. What a memory for quotation

<sup>1</sup> Archbishop Davidson.

Strachey has; whereas Balfour told me at luncheon he had never been able to remember a line: even at Eton could never get through the saying lessons. They both think much more of Keats than of Shelley—we all agreed that it was remarkable how *Endymion* was coming into its own. Strachey had always thought it the most characteristic and great performance of Keats. I said how *Hyperion* had lately proved less fine than I expected, and *Endymion* finer. Colvin said Mackail had lately been saying the same thing, and he, Colvin, though he thought *Hyperion* to be the greatest work, was more impressed by *Endymion* every time he read it. He is writing a great life of Keats.

May 28. Reading *Faerie Queene* with children. We are going to do it between 6.30 and 7 every day, and they seem to love it and—what is strange—find it “very exciting.” They are wonderful lovers of poetry.

June 26. Dined Frederick Macmillans. Lady Beauchamp told me the most curious telepathic story I have ever heard. George Wyndham made great friends with a lay-reader and preacher, one Mr. Dunne. This man, staying with his wife and son at Lucerne last June 22, went to early Communion, walking there with the priest, and asked the priest to pray specially for his son whose birthday it was. When he came out of church he said to the priest: “I hope you were able to pray for my boy, for I was not. I had to give all my prayers to George Wyndham, who somehow seems to need them very much. I can’t get him out of my mind.” He told his wife how he had felt and said it must be fancy. In the afternoon he went out by the lake with his boy. There was a crowd trying to save a drowning dog, and looking on at its struggle he said to his boy: “Oh, there’s Mr. Wyndham; he will save the dog if anyone can.” They tried to get at him, but it seemed that he always disappeared farther off in the crowd. He told his wife and she said: “Oh, that’s why you were thinking of him. He is near us, you see.” G. Wyndham died in Paris that Sunday.

July 3. To Shakespeare Commem. Meeting at 3.0. The Archbishop said a word in defence of poor Bowdler, and said that he had not always prevented his readers from getting a full-blooded taste for Shakespeare, for he knew of a boy who arrived at Eton with a Bowdler's Shakespeare and lived to be Algernon Charles Swinburne.

July 21. MOUNT GRACE PRIORY, NORTHALLERTON.<sup>1</sup>—Dined Bells. I have seldom had an evening of better talk somehow. . . . I vaguely remember it as ranging over travel in Greece, the Swedes and Norwegians; Hobbes's *Leviathan*; Tolstoi's novels; Gösta Berling; *La Maison du Pêché*; the behaviour of men who know they are to die, as seen in French Revolution and in cancer patients—and the curious cases of Leslie Stephen and Alfred Robinson, who both developed a new ease and pleasantness directly they had not long to live.

August 21. Dined Basil Thomsons.<sup>2</sup> Bruce [Richmond] was there and told us Chirol<sup>3</sup> had lunched at the Foreign Office with Asquith, Grey, and the two Cambons. Grey said he had only met the German Emperor four times, and each time he had said to him (amazingly insolent it appears to me): "I can be at Paris in twelve days whenever I like."

September 10. Lunched with Humphry Ward and the Neville Lytteltons.<sup>4</sup> Much talk about the supposed 150,000 Russians. Neville does not believe in them, but says Grey and Haldane denied them in such a perfunctory manner to him that he was almost tempted to believe.

September 13. Dined Richmonds. Bruce—confirmed last night by Hermione [Lyttelton], whose authority was Charles Masterman,<sup>5</sup> who was at the Cabinet when the

<sup>1</sup> An old Carthusian Priory which was lent to us this summer by Sir Hugh and Lady Bell.

<sup>2</sup> Later Sir Basil Thomson, K.C.B., Assistant Commissioner, Metropolitan Police, and Director of Intelligence.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Valentine Chirol.

<sup>4</sup> My half-brother, General Sir Neville Lyttelton, at that time Governor of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, and his wife.

<sup>5</sup> Rt. Hon. Charles Masterman, M.P. He had married Lucy, the eldest daughter of Sir Neville and Lady Lyttelton.

scene occurred—says that there was a royal row when the French failed to support our retreat. French was so angry that he told Joffre he would withdraw the British Army, and he telegraphed the same home. In short, his violent temper sent him off his head, tho' he had great justification. Asquith said, when the telegram was brought into the Cabinet: "There is only one thing to be done: you must go out at once, Kitchener." K. started that afternoon, saw French and Joffre, pacified them both, and made suggestions which were accepted as the future plan of campaign.

September 23. Lunched with Ball and Charles Hobhouse<sup>1</sup> at Athenæum. Ball told me Lord Rothschild says he cannot think the Germans can stand the financial strain more than another six months.

October 8. George Trevelyan lunched . . . He is very anxious that we should keep in view that the settlement of Europe must be on *national* not on Congress of Vienna lines; but admits the difficulty of a half-German half-French Alsace and a half-Italian half-Slav Trieste and Dalmatia.

October 10. The most terrible day since the war began. The fall of Antwerp! I managed to pull myself together and do a little more Carducci; reading Ariosto book for *Times*. It is best to do one's daily work and not sit over newspapers all day.

October 11. Old Henry James asked me to come and see him and was extraordinarily affectionate, kissing me on both cheeks when I arrived and thanking me enormously for coming. He is passionately English and says it is almost good that we were so little prepared, as it makes our moral position so splendid. He almost wept as he spoke. He says America is enthusiastically with us, both from sympathy of ideas and obvious interest, and that the Bernsdorff campaign has ludicrously failed. We talked

<sup>1</sup> Later Sir Charles Hobhouse, M.P.

then of many other things; of Georges Sand, of whom he said: "She was a man . . . a woman can transform herself into a man, but never into a gentleman!" Of Flaubert; Tourgenieff; Cramb<sup>1</sup>; etc.

October 22. Medge [Talbot] and Harold Russell dined. He said an officer from Antwerp had told him that they fired from the trenches a long time one evening, and after a time gave it up. Out of the darkness came an old woman, who said to them: "*Bonsoir, Messieurs, je vois que nous allons avoir de la pluie!*"

November 5. Read poems at Working Men's College in the evening to a small attendance of say 40 or 50. They seemed a good deal moved, and often applauded. The Wordsworth sonnets (sonnets are so hard to read) and the Introduction to *Marmion* were the least successful; *Admirals All* won the first outburst of applause! and *The Revenge*. The *Ode on Wellington*; Kipling's *Return*; and Bridges' *Wake up England*, were all obviously successful.

December 9. THE VICARAGE, ELLESMERE, SALOP.<sup>2</sup>—Delivered my speech on "Why we are at war".

December 29. Did duty as special constable, guarding a power station at Holland Park. Larken was with me.

December 30. Special constabling. I took a Virgil and read Eclogue IV to Larken. He brought Emily Brontë and I read aloud one of her poems to him and several to myself.

<sup>1</sup> The late Professor Cramb, author of *England and Germany*.

<sup>2</sup> Where he stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Ellerton.



1915

To Algernon Cecil

34, Queen's Gate Gardens, S.W.

January 26, 1915

. . . I only wanted to say that, on the question of my surprise at your being so much occupied with the question of the true Church, we are, as so often happens, not using words in the same sense. The quest of *truth* is often an agony for me too: and it is only with great reluctance and very great mental discomfort (I might use a stronger word) that I half acquiesce in the conclusion that it is not to be attained to here, in so many of its most profoundly vital and interesting aspects. What I wondered at was not your attaching so much importance to the quest of truth but your view that truth is to be found in the authority of any Church, found in one Church and not in any other. That attitude seems to me amazing—contrary to all history, all probability, to all of what I should call the spirituality of truth's nature. I have no doubt at all that some Quakers, some Jesuits, some Anglicans, and even some Agnostics, are in possession of the truth of God, though they state it in different words. I do not, in short, believe in a Church at all, in the authoritative and exclusive sense of that word, and I think the whole effort of the Tractarians to revive that (in England) long-forgotten idea was, speaking broadly, an intellectual disaster. It seems to me the substitution of an external and mechanical Church membership for a real and spiritual one: of a Jewish narrowness for the universality of the New Testament: of a Church dependent on the formalities and externalities of an episcopal and priestly order for the free

and immediate relation of the soul to God, which seems to me the method of the New Testament, to which the very notion of the distinction on which so much stress is laid is entirely unknown.

But we shall never agree on these subjects.

... Have you ever read *The Brothers Karamazov* (Dostoevsky)? I am just finishing it, and, on the whole, I think it the greatest novel I ever read and one of the most searching and disquieting, as well as winning and beautiful, of books. It is full of Christianity, and the hero is a kind of Christian saint with that amazing love of sinners which is the only thing that heals them, and reveals Christ, I suppose, more than any other trait: and is one of the many things in the book that fill me with shame and a sense of how very far off I am from being in the real sense a Christian. It is full, too, of that sense of Christianity involving conversion, a new man, a complete break with the world, a bursting through all half measures and hesitations, an indifference to everything except love and joy (he lays great stress on joy) which is always difficult and strange to my compromising nature. But it is a very great book.

Yours aff.

JOHN C. B.

To his Wife

34, Queen's Gate Gardens, S.W.

April 14, 1915

... I got through my constabling pretty well with my worthy Church Army friend, but for the first time since I have done it read nothing practically except two acts of that puzzling play *Measure for Measure*...

Doll [Liddell] met Swinburne more than once at Jowett's; chiefly remembers thinking how ugly he was. He said a cousin of his had breakfasted as a boy with old Landor at Florence—or rather had not breakfasted, as Landor, not liking the breakfast, had thrown it out of the

window: and the disappointment impressed itself on the boy's mind more than the best breakfast or the wisest talk would have.

*From Mary Cholmondeley*

*The Cottage,  
Ufford, Suffolk  
May 24, 1915*

DEAR JOHN,

I have just finished your *Milton*.<sup>1</sup> In more normal times I should have read it quickly, and should have written to you long before this. But nowadays my feeble mind becomes so quickly exhausted that I have only been able to read a little bit at a time, not the best way of getting the pith out of a book.

When you snatched it out of an inner pocket and presented it to me I was much pleased by your kind thought of me, but I felt sure I could not care for it as much as for the *Dr. Johnson* I was using.

I like it immensely, much more than *Dr. Johnson*. I admire your *Milton* with my whole heart, and as far as I can judge it is an advance on your previous excellent work, which is saying a good deal.

This last book seems to raise one to a higher plane as one reads, and it is sustained on a high level: you do not only touch it, you remain on it.

One closes the book with an impulse of great respect not only for John Milton but—for John Bailey! And I have chuckled over your definition of Miltonic religion as “a very one-sided bargain with a very dangerous Potentate”. Surely that sentence has a touch of Johnson in it, but I suppose none of Johnson's generation could have seen that aspect of *Paradise Lost*.

<sup>1</sup> *Milton*—published in The Home University Library this year.

To Wilfrid Ward

The Athenæum,  
Pall Mall, S.W.

June 10, 1915

MY DEAR WILFRID,

I don't think I agree with you. The difficulty of the *objective* view which you say is so *obvious* in the case of painting is that it breaks down at once in the presence of a photograph or Madame Tussaud. The photograph is the objective man recorded by the impersonal sun—Madame Tussaud's figures have often been mistaken for living persons. So I myself have mistaken the figure of Tasso in San Onofrio at Rome for life. In every case this life-likeness is the precise negation of *art*. Art requires the personality of the artist as well as that of his sitter: it is not art without. The ordinary academy portrait—Harris Brown of the Bishop of Winchester for instance is exactly, almost horribly, like. But there being no Harris Brown in it—or indeed *in rerum natura* at all—it is perfectly dead as art, as dead as one of Leader's landscapes, which are exactly like what any fool can see in the open air for himself. Leader has contributed nothing.

Of course, artists often tend, especially after they have attained success, to "abound in their own sense" and give too much of themselves and too little of the subject or the sitter. So Turner's later landscapes, so Vandyke's later portraits, which are just Vandyke over and over again, all the same graceful gentility which he liked, nothing to mark the different characters of the different sitters.

No doubt as you say the aim of the artist, whether in painting or biography or history, should be to tell the truth. But art is, as I think Plato would have said, the *limited*, not the unlimited which is chaos. It is a process of limitation and definition—and its very *differentia* is to know that it is a compound of two things which limit each other. One is the facts, the actual man or face: the other is the form to be impressed upon them to take them out of the chaos of mere material, and that form is the personal genius of the artist or writer. The artist cannot give

the whole of himself because he is limited by his subjects; he cannot give the whole of his subjects because it has to be passed through himself and reshaped by his mind, in which process something is taken away and something added. If *homo* is *additus naturae* something has to come away to make room for him. That is how I see it at any rate, and any purely *objective* art seems to me to be in fact not art at all—which is human and spiritual, but science—which is material and impersonal.

Yours ever,  
JOHN C. B.

To Percy Matheson

34, Queen's Gate Gardens, S.W.  
June 18, 1915

MY DEAR PERCY,

I am sure you have not heard of our great sorrow—I have not been able to write any letters except to the nearest relatives till yesterday. Our dear little Rachel died this day week very suddenly after being ill—with acute bronchitis again—only a few hours. We took the little body to Wramplingham on Monday and laid it in the churchyard there on Tuesday.

I know you will feel for us all—and especially for poor little Ruth. People write of Rachel being taken from a life of pain. That was not all the case. She never had any pain in her life unless the struggle for breath in her last hours—and once or twice in her long illness. She was always the happiest and merriest of our children, and made life a joy to herself and, as I think you know, to all who were with her. We seem to have lost the centre and fountain of all our family jokes and laughter. So it is in a way very specially hard to bear. And you can guess something of what it is for dear little Ruth, for whom Rachel—always the leading spirit of the two—was the whole of life; and for Sarah, whose every thought almost has been devoted to the care of Rachel, and whose whole heart has naturally gone out to the weak one for whom

she was always hoping and fighting and praying. I know we must try to think of our sorrow as one item in the great stream of sorrow that is flowing through the world—with purifying and cleansing waters as we must believe, unless we doubt that the world is divinely ordered. But—God help us—it is not easy, least of all for a mother and for a twin sister.

Yours ever,

JOHN C. B.

*To his daughter Ruth*

34, *Queen's Gate Gardens, S.W.*

*July 13, 1915*

... I hope you are having as happy a time as you can, my dear little Ruth. You know how we all feel specially for you. I am sure you must feel the want of our dear little Rachel every day. She helped us all so—didn't she?—by her happy and funny little ways, and her wonderful love for us all, especially you and mother. We shall never be quite the same family again, and in a way we shouldn't wish to, should we? I like to think of her as near us still and still loving us and wanting to help us and now understanding so many things that we cannot understand; changed in some great way by being in the presence of God, but not changed a bit in herself as she loved us and loved her life so bravely and cheerfully here. I think the brave soldiers who have been dying all these months in the war will welcome her in Heaven and feel she belongs to them and was as brave in her little way as they in theirs; for she never once complained, I do believe, of any of the things she could not do or the pleasure she could not have. We must try to think that God knows best, and perhaps if she had stayed on with us her life would have been one of more and more weakness and illness; and that would have been very hard for her to bear or for us to see, wouldn't it?

... Mother is very busy with the C.O.S. and soldiers

and I am rather, too. I have just finished my Special Constabbling. I heard of a Constable who caught the Station Master of Rotherhithe going with two men into a tunnel, and they turned out to be Germans. That was rather a big business—more of an adventure by a long way than anything that has happened to me.

. . . Good-bye now, my dear little Ruth. We must all love each other very much indeed. I think we do.

Your affectionate Father,

JOHN C. B.

*To Wilfrid Ward*

34, Queen's Gate Gardens, S.W.  
October 27, 1915

MY DEAR WILFRID,

Many thanks for sending me your article—I think your point is excellent and new so far as I know. The Pacifists surely misinterpret Christianity. War is, in my eyes, a thing horrible, foolish, and a thing we must work to get rid of. (You may see an article of mine in the current *Quarterly* in which I have said a few words on this). But while bad men use it as a weapon of offence, Christians might use it and ought to use it as a weapon of defence. They fight as we are fighting to-day, not for merely selfish aims or material aims, but for the preservation of the conditions of free and good life. And it is clear from our Lord's own example that the literal interpretation of the precept of turning the other cheek is one of those many stupidities which arise from treating the Bible as science and not literature. When He was smitten on the one cheek He did not turn the other, but rebuked the smiter . . .

Yours ever,

JOHN C. B.

*From the Diary*

January 12. Luncheon Neville Lytteltons; met Lady Rothschild, Dorothy Ward, and Sir James Dunlop Smith.

He spoke of the curious semi-divine position of the Aga Khan, who is in fact a clever modern man, drinks champagne, and looks like a diplomat. He once said to Lord Lansdowne: "Oh, I can tell you, sir, being a god is not all beer and skittles!"

January 23. Dined Russells. Mrs. Cecil Wray, who was there, told a curious story which came from an army doctor who had been a prisoner in Germany. One day three officers were separated from the rest and when they met again said they had been put in much more comfortable quarters and given a very good dinner. They did not know at all why. The next day they returned and related that they had been taken before the Commandant, who told them he had sent for them to tell them what they did not know, but which was absolutely true. It was that Ireland had revolted from England and was now an entirely separate Government. (I expect that he added in alliance with Germany.) These facts, he said, obviously relieved them from their oath to King George, and he proposed to them to take commissions in the German Army! Silence followed, then a titter from one of the officers, then roars of laughter—and they were sent back to their original prison—and no more good dinners!

January 27. Finished *Brothers Karamazov*—the greatest novel, I think, that I ever read. Then turned by reaction from its mysticism and dominant "religiosity" to Gibbon's *Autobiography*; was very happy till I went to bed.

February 6. At Fulham (C.O.S.) all morning. To Falconhurst<sup>1</sup> 2.30; a very lively and cheerful family party in the pleasantest of all houses.

February 13. Dined Thomsons. Basil spoke of Gen. Robertson as *the* genius discovered by the war; he began life as a footman, is now Quartermaster-General, and talked of as Chief of Staff. When Basil questioned his having the necessary qualifications for a Chief of Staff,

<sup>1</sup> The country house of my brother-in-law, John Talbot, M.P., and his wife.



all the officers at St. Omer said: "Oh, that man will do for any job he is put to"; they all like him immensely.

March 1. To Literary Society. Norman Moore related the story of the Oxford don who went to be presented to Napoleon in 1802 and was asked by his brother dons: "Well, what was he like?" "Oh, you could see he was not a University man."

March 17. Dined Miss Balfour. Bob Cecil and I talked of the Labour troubles. He blames most the obstinate selfishness and stupidity of some of the masters, generally enough of them to cause bitterness. He is sure the remedy is co-partnership, and is sure it is possible, and would be accepted, if it were fairly offered without such unwise conditions as the Furness demand that they should pledge themselves never to strike. Another thing he said was rather striking. All our Labour troubles (men refusing to work more than three days a week, etc.) are due to the entire absence of love of money in this country.

March 26. Dined Protheros. C. Boyd told S. a curious conversation he had had with Jagow, the German Foreign Minister, who was very kind to him. They were walking in Berlin and saw the Kaiser. "So that's your Emperor!" said Boyd. "Yes, but he's not nearly so important as you English fancy. In England the King makes the foreign policy, here the Emperor has very little to do with it." A long argument then followed. Boyd tried to convince Jagow of the fact that the German notion that the Entente policy was the personal policy of Edward VII was a complete delusion. He was very unwilling to believe that the King of England had very little political power at all. Finally he said that if it were so it was a more convenient plan than the German one which enabled a man, "with the temperament of an actor and the mind of a journalist", and without the power of concentrating his mind on any subject for more than ten minutes, to enter into any Government office, demand to see the papers and be told everything, and generally to interrupt and interfere

with the conduct of affairs. Boyd said Jagow was very English in sympathy, and had done what he could to make the mob behave decently at the outbreak of war.

March 27. Lunched with H. Fisher, who had lately seen Kitchener (still maintaining his view of the long war). Grey told him that the last time he ever saw the Kaiser, at a luncheon-party, he began abusing the Jews to him, and when Grey tried to calm him down and said we managed very well with our Jews in England, he replied, hissing with hatred: "I tell you, Sir Edward, what ought to be done with the German Jews; they ought to be *killed, killed, killed!*"

April 10. THE CHANTRY, ROSS, HEREFORDSHIRE.<sup>1</sup>—Walked and enjoyed the beautiful familiar views over the Welsh Hills and the Malverns, and recalled many memories of past days.—some of the greatest to me of my life.

May 22. CORNBURY PARK, CHARLBURY.<sup>2</sup>—Cornbury looked quite lovely and the park and forest and beautiful house lay in brilliant sunshine. . . . I never felt the young and old so divided before, or myself so clearly among the old!

June 6. Grace [Thomson] came after dinner. She said that A.J.B. had said: "If only Winston would decide whether he is Wellington or Nelson, we should be able to get on!"

June 7. To Literary Society. The talk was very pleasant, partly about novels: Conrad, Scott, etc. With Norman Moore about Swift, in whose marriage he entirely believes. He told a pretty story of an experience of his: he was riding in Ireland with a friend, and they met a farmer riding and stopped to talk with him. Moore said: "What is your horse's name?" "M.D.," said the man. "That's a curious name for a horse. Dr. of Medicine." "Oh no; that's not what it means. It's the name the Dean gave to Stella!"

<sup>1</sup> See page 87. It was at this house that John and I had become engaged.

<sup>2</sup> Where we were staying with Mr. and Lady Margaret Watney.

July 14. George Trevelyan came round after tea. He is just back from Italy, where he has organized an ambulance gift. He says that the German diplomacy has everywhere been unlike that of a civilized country; their Embassies centres of bullying, bribing, and financial schemes; often an organization of crimes (like the Spanish Embassy in England in Tudor days); . . . it suits the Balkans where you can bribe and bully, unlike Italy and U.S.A., where its methods have enormously helped the Allies.

October 4. — joined the Roman Church on Saturday. In the end a man who craves for visible authority to define his religion on this earth must go to Rome for it: to me it is all very strange. I can't conceive being troubled on my death-bed by any question as to whether I was in the true Church or not, though I can imagine only too well being worried, then as now, as to my reconciliation of the service of God and Mammon. . . . Well, *requiescat in pace!* It seems to me a kind of death or slavery that he has gone into, but I pray that he may have the peace that comes of a great resolution at last taken, and that is deserved by the courage necessary to take it (a courage I should never have).

October 13. An emergency call came, and the result was that I was standing by a lamp-post in Queen's Gate at 1.15 a.m. It was a lovely night of stars and I said some poetry in the intervals of talking to policemen and others. I saw no Zeppelin and heard nothing after the distant guns at 3.30. I only saw some flashes in the sky, like fireworks without any scattering of sparks, quite silent.

November 1. Dined Literary Society. J. Murray told me a good story—a captured German officer turning with insolence to an English officer and saying: "We are not like you; you English officers are out only for money; we German officers are out only for honour." "In that case," said the Englishman, "we seem both to have missed our shot."

November 17. I set to reading Lockhart. I felt I preferred the character of Scott very much to that of St. Francis; his personality and life is to me much more attractive.

November 23. Bradley<sup>1</sup> lunched and we talked. He said he had not himself—nor have I—Tennyson's intense conviction that the world and life would be meaningless and horrible unless personality continued after death. But he believes that the whole process of things has a meaning and is a natural process; he expects survival in some shape and is inclined to expect, though not to wish for, something in the nature of a purgatorial state after death. He also talked of the difficulty of getting from the perhaps knowable Absolute which is behind Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, to the Personal God whom we can love and live with and by. And we were interrupted by luncheon as we began to talk of the Christian teaching of the Incarnation as meeting that difficulty.

December 16. Sent off Christmas Sermon for *Lit. Supp.* on Birth and Death. I don't think it's a bad sermon, but few people have less right than I to preach it.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Andrew Bradley; author of *Shakespearian Tragedy*, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, and other works.

1916

*To Wilfrid Ward*

34, *Queen's Gate Gardens, S.W.*

March 19, 1916

MY DEAR WILFRID,

I do not know whether you are well enough to read letters, but I can't help hoping that you are from what Mrs. Ward wrote to me about the operation, your frequent good nights and the hope of moving you to London. Do thank her very much indeed for her letter. Of course we are often thinking of you and in some ways still more of her. For I always think I felt it as in my own illness—that the person to sympathize with most of all is not the sufferer, as he is called, but those who love him and are wracked with anxiety, and are forced to look on and have a helpless feeling very often, as if they ought to be able to use their health and strength to relieve the pain and illness, and they cannot. I know we felt that sort of feeling with our dear little daughter.

I do hope you don't have much to suffer, and that you go on steadily feeling stronger and easier. It must be a strange and great experience to be so ill as you have been—and not least so for one who has thought and written so much as you have about the greatest of all questions. I wonder whether you have been too tired and weak to think—I expect that many old things have become new to you and new things been born in your mind.

It is strange indeed to think of you, who were always so intensely full of eager life and interest in so many things, as forced to lie still and I suppose content yourself, at present at any rate, with very little talking and reading and seeing of friends.

I wonder whether all the interests of the world and its affairs seem during this time very far away from you. I remember when I was ill I was very keen to get to books, but found newspapers seemed unimportant and dull. I don't mean in the least on religious grounds, for it wasn't religious books that I wanted to read, but I didn't find anything fine or big enough in newspapers. On the other hand I remember being surprised to hear that Arthur Lyttelton during his illness and right up to the end was immensely interested in newspapers, which was curious I thought—both because he was in a way a saint and always a man with a fastidiously fine sense of quality in literature. I suppose he was just too weak for stronger food.

Good-bye, dear Wilfrid. Let us think of each other, and more than think.

Yours ever,  
JOHN BAILEY.

*To W. W. Vaughan*

*Old Marks,<sup>1</sup> Holtye,  
Cowden, Kent  
August 24, 1916*

MY DEAR WILL,

I got back here yesterday from Wramplingham. They are wonderfully brave and to my astonishment quite well.<sup>2</sup> I think that they are uplifted by their pride in his gallant death and by all the letters they receive about him. Two from Winton<sup>3</sup> gave them particular pleasure and three from his Colonel and Captain and from boys who knew him well at Eton. All speak of what is true—a very fine character of a simple kind, one which had a good influence everywhere—"a quietly noble life" someone wrote. And then the burst of sympathy with them from so many people has been a comfort and support. What I dread is

<sup>1</sup> A small house in Kent which we took for the summer holidays.

<sup>2</sup> This letter refers to the death of Arthur and Helen Bailey's only child, Anthony Yorke Bailey. He joined the K.R.R. on leaving Eton, and was killed in action on the Somme at the end of July, 1916.

<sup>3</sup> Bishop Talbot of Winchester.

the time coming, when other people begin to forget and the world goes on its necessary way, and the windows of life for them look out on blank and empty spaces which there seems to be nothing to fill. But I am not sure that they are not being helped in a way that will make the inspiration of this sorrow a permanent strength.

*To Napier Miles*

October 8, 1916

... It was a great joy to see you both and King's Weston again, and to admire your wonderful "war service" and feel that all the beauties of the house and place are being put to such splendid use.<sup>1</sup> And then your proposed gift to us!<sup>2</sup> It will really be one of the most beautiful things we have and I am immensely proud to be the medium of such a gift. Thank you for myself and for the Trust a hundred times. . . .

*Datchet House,<sup>3</sup>*

*To W. W. Vaughan*

*Datchet*

December 23, 1916

MY DEAR WILL,

I was amused to get the Johnson answers and to hear of myself as—what is it that Horace says?—become a torment to schoolboys. . . .

But we have had a sad autumn with my brother Leslie's<sup>4</sup> illness and death. As you know he and I were as unlike as two men can be, but we had a constant and affectionate correspondence, and his death took me back to my nursery. His last weeks were a wonderful example of courage—he never would admit he suffered pain or make any allusion even to his great discomforts, and his nurse told me

<sup>1</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Miles had lent their house, King's Weston, for a War Hospital.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Miles had presented 90 acres of his property—part of Shirehampton Park—to the National Trust.

<sup>3</sup> The home of my sister, Sybil, and her husband, Sir Lionel Cust, K.C.V.O.

<sup>4</sup> John's youngest brother Leslie died in the autumn of this year. He had married Janet Buchanan, who survived him.

he turned all she did for him into a joke. How very often these who are furthest from making any pretension to be saints "take up their cross" with an ease the greatest saints might envy. . . .

I think I am glad of the change of Ministry, though the way it was done was of the worst. . . . Grey's friends admit he was quite worn out. He himself said to Katherine Lyttelton: "I feel like a man who has been walking a thousand miles and is at last allowed to sit down." And Lady Buxton,<sup>1</sup> another great friend, told me before his fall that he could not keep awake. But *The Times* and other papers ought to have done him and Asquith all honour for the labour and burden they have borne so long and so bravely.

. . . I should like to háng that empty windbag [President] Wilson! I am afraid he is proving that the don in politics is always the victim of plausible humbug. Balfour will tell him very plainly that the objects of the Allies and their enemies are as far apart as North Pole and South, and that that was clear to everyone except himself a fortnight after the war began.

### *From the Diary*

January 10. Fifty-two to-day, alas!

Dined Literary Society. Fisher told me what Hadow had said of Bentham in his Lecture; Bentham was a kind of inverted Cassandra: C. was a lady who prophesied true things and was never believed: B. was a gentleman who prophesied false things and was always believed!

January 12. Gave Spenser Lecture. Horrified to see Mackail<sup>2</sup> in room! However, I got through, and he and Sidney Lee were not only publicly but privately warm in their assurances that they found it interesting and suggestive. But I felt on very thin ice all the while, especially with such pundits in the room.

<sup>1</sup> Wife of Earl Buxton.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Mackail, O.M.



January 25. Dined Mary Cholmondeley. She told me Lady Frances Balfour had told her that lately Bryce, Morley, and others were talking, and all agreed that two men had emerged far greater through the war and two had lost their opportunity and proved inferior to their position and reputation. The first two were King Albert and Botha; and the second President Wilson and the Pope.

February 11. Very happy, reading about French poetry, and then at home reading *Poets of To-day*, and feeling, I hope rightly, that that is my function and place in the world—to love art and letters and in some small way help others to love them too. To church at 6.0. I more and more feel that people like Gore with their rigidity turn what ought to be vision into science, and what ought to be inspiration into a code of laws. It is the difference between Leviticus and the 119th Psalm.

February 13. Read *Paradise Lost* XI. with S. and children after dinner; we four are so happy together.

February 14. Walked with Bradley. He spoke of the curious suggestion of a fire of vision and emotion behind the crabbed sentences of Aristotle, sometimes striking one all the more for the contrast with Plato's amazing ease of utterance. I asked him which was the greater man, and am glad to say he seemed to think Plato was—if only because Aristotle had Plato before him, and Plato had almost nothing before *him*.

February 19. Walked with Bradley. We talked Wordsworth. B. thought that Wordsworth, like Tennyson, had poetically been a loser by being such a happy and successful man, even by having such a happy home and dear ones, like Lady Tennyson, whose feelings he could not bear wounding, which made him like Tennyson (or rather much more than Tennyson) narrowly orthodox in his later life. Tennyson would never have said as W. did that the cholera of 1830 could not cause surprise after the sins of the nation. He thought it also very unfortunate for Wordsworth that after a time he saw so little of Coleridge, whose

mind always remained free and expansive. But on my questioning him he agreed that in the original poetic friendship Wordsworth had influenced Coleridge more than Coleridge Wordsworth. What Coleridge did was to give a *philosophy* and reasoned exposition to Wordsworth's poetic instincts.

March 12. Called on Mrs. William James. She said Henry James had ordered a very simple religious service only at Golder's Green, but she felt he had not understood how many of his friends would wish to come, and had decided on the service at the Old Chelsea Church where he used occasionally to drop in and where he liked to remember Sir Thos. More had sung in the choir. I then went on to Katherine [Lyttelton] who told me a fine thing—how he went to a hospital last year where was a man who had lost both legs at the Front and had no more hope or wish for life, so that they thought he would die. But dear old Henry went to him and said in such a moving way: "Dear man, be proud and happy; try to think how all who see you all your life will envy and admire you—how you are beginning a new and wonderful life from having been able to make this tremendous and supreme offering to the greatest cause that ever men fought for." The man was so surprised and conquered that he became a new creature and got well.

March 13. To Windsor. Lunched with Luxmoore, who told me of an old gentleman who had told him that when he came to Eton he was put in charge of "Mr. Shelley" who was a "very gentlemanlike boy". "And did you once see Shelley plain?"

April 8. Heard the very sad news of my dear Cowper Johnson's<sup>1</sup> death—one of my best friends. I don't know which was greater—his charm of manner or his goodness of heart.

April 18. FRESHWATER, I.O.W. I walked over to Farringford to return Lord Tennyson's<sup>2</sup> call; and had a long sit

<sup>1</sup> Canon Cowper Johnson, Rector of Yaxham, East Dereham, Norfolk.  
See p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Hallam, Lord Tennyson.

in the poet's smoking-room while Tennyson smoked. He talked of Queen Victoria, for whom he has a strong affection. He told me that when he was going to Australia and had said his farewell to her, she sent for him again and said: "I have a particular favour to ask of you." He assured her, of course, that her wishes were commands, whereupon she said: "I want you to do something which I know will be tiresome for you: I want you to go often to race meetings, in Australia; the Australians think so much of their racing—"

June 12. Medge [Talbot] dined and told me the finest thing I have yet heard—the highest reach of the heroic spirit. A. Legge—Lord Dartmouth's son—had told her that the *Warspite*, on which he was, tore through the water in the battle. They saw below them scores of drowning men, and as they rushed by, unable to stop for a moment to save anyone, these men gave their last breath in a cheer. *Morituri salutant*, indeed—almost more than *morituri*.

June 18. After dinner, as I had a cold, children and S. read poetry to me. I was very pleased with their choice. Jenny read *Forsaken Merman*, *Blest Pair*, *It was not like your great and gracious ways*, *Ariel to Miranda*. Ruth, *I heard a thousand blended notes*, *The Daffodils*, Yeats's *Innisfree*, Shelley's *Spirit of Delight*, etc. They told me the other day that they often say poetry to each other in bed.

July 25. Lunched at Athenæum with John Buchan. He is very cheerful about things. He asked me if I would go to Paris and be attached to the Embassy as representative of the Publicity Committee at the F. Office. But I declined and he agreed that I could scarcely give up all my jobs here. I don't think I ought, and I don't want to. He would not agree (but I am sure I am right) that I should make a great mess of managing "publicity" in Paris, which I suppose means interviewing music-hall and cinematograph proprietors and newspaper men. It wants a

business man! I offered later on to help him at the F.O. as a half-timer, two or three hours a day, and he seemed to welcome the idea.

October 23. George Trevelyan and Bruce Richmond dined. George wore his decoration.<sup>1</sup> He is very strongly in favour of fighting to a finish; if not, he says, the Germans, with their State control of education, will be able to make all their people believe they were not beaten, and induce them to begin again. He has no sort of hope of a German collapse and does not feel too confident of finishing them next year. He was very enthusiastic about my *Milton*, which he bought in a shop in Milan! It was a great comfort when one so often feels oneself an unprofitable servant, and is depressed by the thought, to find a man reading one abroad with much enthusiasm when engaged in such a glorious work. He said he had been used to think civilization had corrupted people—but he felt quite differently now after seeing how the three most civilized nations in the world had risen to meet the call upon them.

November 18. To Walhampton House, Lymington.<sup>2</sup> St. Cyres told me a story of old Lady Dorothy Nevill coming to Downing Street—his grandfather's [Lord Iddesleigh's] house—and asking Lady Northcote to ask Dizzy if he could do something civil for Mr. Mallock, who had just published his *New Republic* and must be secured as a brilliant recruit for the party. Dizzy said at first that he was too old to be troubled with young men or new books—I forget the exact phrase—but Lady Dorothy continued to press him. At last he turned and went inside his house and said: "Dear Lady Dorothy, alas I cannot lunch with you; I am going to Hughenden. Would that its gloomy shades could be peopled by the bright creations of Mr. Mallock's fancy!"

<sup>1</sup> The Silver Medal for Valour—Italy, 1915.

<sup>2</sup> The country house of Lord and Lady St. Cyres.

*From the Diary*

January 22. Wrote John Buchan, offering to take work under him if he is put at head of the new Government Publicity Department.

February 5. Dined Literary Society. The chief thing I remember was Newbolt saying that he remembered Lady Grey<sup>1</sup> saying: "Rosebery is a dark room, but I like feeling about in it; it is pretty big and one never gets to the walls!"

February 20. Schuster told me one curious fact. In his "publicity" work he was trying to get better treatment for American newspaper correspondents with a view to American opinion. At War Office Sir Reginald Brade was very hostile. "What does American opinion matter?" But when he saw Balfour, A.J.B. said: "You may tell Sir R. Brade that I think a really friendly America will be worth a hundred thousand men to us."

March 1. Lectured on Don Quixote at Lady Enfield's house in St. James's Square. There were some thirty or more people; a bevy of Peeresses. Lady Jersey, Lady Northcote, Lady Hylton, Lady Airlie, and others. How much these noble ladies knew about the books I talked about I don't know. Lady Jersey at any rate knew more than I about one, for she asked me if I thought Don Quixote was influenced by the *Golden Ass* of Apuleius, which I have not read.

March 6. I am reading as my Lenten book, Glover's *Jesus of History*. It represents the "violence" of the most

<sup>1</sup> The first wife of Sir Edward, afterwards Viscount Grey of Fallodon.

modern interpretation of Christianity, which, perhaps wrongly, is very uncongenial to me; also Matthew Arnold's dear *Note-Books*, which always move and help me.

March 25. Read Alfred Lyttelton's life—admirably done by D.D.<sup>1</sup>—and felt really inspired as well as shamed by it, and, of course, most of all made happy by the sheer pleasure of reading about Alfred.

May 7. At dinner I talked to — about Swinburne, whom he knew; he was a little in that Arts Club set. He told me Swinburne's quarrel with the Committee was due to the fact not only that he was too constantly drunk there but that on the final occasion, being drunk and not able to find his hat, he tried others, and as each proved too small for his enormous head he threw it wrathfully on the ground and stamped on it—which naturally brought some complaints to the Committee next day. He complained that Gosse (in his life) had given nothing of Swinburne's humour, much of which indeed was not very printable, though essentially harmless enough—as his invention about Queen Victoria's confessing, in French for some reason, presumably because A.C.S. liked talking French—to the Duchess of Kent her unfortunate lapse from virtue. "*Ce n'était pas un prince; ce n'était pas un milord, ni même Sir R. Peel. C'était un misérable du peuple, en nomme Wordsworth, qui m'a recité des vers de son Excursion d'une sensualité si chaleureuse qu'ils m'ont ébranlée—et je suis tombée.*" I quote from memory, very likely not —'s words. He said he remembered Swinburne, for all his paganism, breaking out when someone implied that no one but a fool could be a Christian, and pointing to the absurdity of such a remark when you had before you such men as Newman and Browning. Yet in one of his *Essays* I remember he urges, very justly I think, that the *Grammar of Assent* establishes atheism by a rational process and restores faith by an irrational one—or words to that effect.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton, now Dame Edith Lyttelton, C.B.E.

May 21. Much depressed, as it seems to be quite impossible for me to publish any weekly reports on France and Spain which could be of the smallest use to the august personages who are supposed to read them.

June 1st. Rather pleased—in fact very much pleased to find that Gleichen<sup>1</sup> marks my three reports on Spain, Italy, France “excellent”, and orders the usual number to be typed for circulation to the War Cabinet.

June 4. Dined Literary Society. Curious talk with Ker,<sup>2</sup> who would assert that *Northanger Abbey* is the best Jane Austen—a form of madness.

June 28. Dined at Athenæum, a large party invited by H. Fisher to meet Havelague and Legouis. I never heard anyone speak a language not his own as perfectly as H. spoke English, but I did not like him, though he is evidently very able. He was distinctly gloomy and querulous—as are most Frenchmen just now—and got the right answer from dear old W. P. Ker, who was talking to him with me. Said Havelague: “Suppose Germany won the war?” “I *don't* suppose it!” interrupted W.P. emphatically!

July 20. We lunched with Herbert Fisher at House of Commons. He said he had asked Lloyd George if any improvements in army and war had come from the soldiers, and L.G. believed only one, all the time; they have resisted every new idea—as for instance high explosives, and justified Briand's *mot*: “*Ah, la guerre est chose trop sérieuse pour qu'on la laisse aux militaires.*”

July 19. H. Fisher and George Lyttelton dined. H.F. said he was anxious about the growth of republicanism in Lancashire (due to cotton shortage, he thought) and the extraordinary folly and selfishness of the majority of northern employers; confirmed by George<sup>3</sup> on Caryl's<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lord Edward Gleichen, K.C.V.O., Director of Intelligence Bureau, Dept. of Information 1917-18.

<sup>2</sup> W. P. Ker, later Professor of Poetry at Oxford.

<sup>3</sup> George Lyttelton, now a house-master at Eton.

<sup>4</sup> His brother, Charles Lyttelton, who had recently been working as a curate in the North of England.

authority, who says every workman is made a Socialist naturally and inevitably by their stupidity and "damn them, shoot them" attitude. He told me Edward Grey had said, the day the war began, to Sir Courtney Ilbert: "Five years hence there will be Labour Cabinets in every country in Europe!"

November 5. I never get time for diary now, but I re-open it to say that I dined with the Literary last night. Chirol [Sir Valentine] told me he always hated Bernsdorff. Bernsdorff always professed friendship for England, so when he left Washington (where he had been German Ambassador) Chirol wrote to him from Holland. "Sir V. Chirol congratulates Count Bernsdorff on having fully performed the promise he long ago made to Sir V. Chirol (though Sir V. confesses that he had no hope at the time of seeing it performed) that he would certainly render all the service he could to England!" Pretty good—I hope he got it.

*From Mary Cholmondeley*

2, Leonard Place,  
Kensington, W.  
March 1, 1917

MY DEAR JOHN,

I always admire what you write, but to-day's "Optimist and Pessimist"<sup>1</sup> appeals to me, and stirs me more deeply than I find it easy to say.

It needed saying, and you have said it, as I think few could. I do take off my hat and wave it! I think Sarah must rejoice too, and your words will warm many hearts.

One of the many *true* things in it is your assertion that when we believe in goodness we not only find it—we *make* it. That is the bedrock. How one has seen it, and seen it, and seen it, until one learns that *one* touch of the spirit of Christ can always make—here and now—bedridden spirits take up their beds and walk.

You say the pessimist believes neither in God nor in man.

<sup>1</sup> An article which John had written in the *Literary Supplement*.



But surely a real belief in God entails belief in man. It is part of the same thing, isn't it? I can't separate them personally, especially when I see people shining with God, as some of us do see many of our fellow creatures. I would have given a good deal to have written that article.

This needs no answer.

It is just a clapping of the hands as you pass.

Yours ever,  
M. C.

I must own that I have sometimes thought you were too optimistic, but nothing in the article is too much so. I think my own optimism is partly that I have staked all on the war. If my country goes down I could never care for anything again, so I put the possibility from my mind.

*To his Wife*

*The Athenæum,*  
*April 14, 1917*

. . . I don't know that there is much to tell you. I did my Trust business and then my Hospital and so home to tea and finished *Curiosity Shop* which I have certainly never read before. I finished it with breathless interest, not because the story is really convincing—for, as usual with Dickens, the villains are too villainous for life and the angels too angelic—but because Dickens *can* make one love and care for his people: and did anyone ever make you jump with joy and jollity as he does when things go right, and all the world flows with milk and honey, or rather, with beef and punch and porter. That is his greatest strength, after his humour—he loves *living* so, and is always ready to dance and sing about the ordinary incidents of bed and board, the road and the sunlight, dry after wet, warmth after cold. He has vitality enough for a hundred ordinary novelists: though any one of any hundred ordinary storytellers has as much subtlety and distinction of mind as he.

*To his Wife**June 3, 1917*

. . . What you say about Boccaccio and Mérimée is certainly true, and always a danger of the intellectual or artistic temperament. You remember Sainte Beuve's "*Lisons tout Mad. de Sévigné*"? Yet literature, art, the spring, and so forth have, I do think, their part to play in times like these, if we don't let them play the parts they have no right to play. They ought not to keep us from acting or feeling for others in times of trouble, but if they do not do that they are unmixed good—in consolation, in restoring balance, and in giving one the feeling of how eternal art and the spring are, and how temporary and passing war is. There is something to *rest* on surely in the thought of art as an *eternal* thing, partaking of life in a way no war can.

I had one of the most delightful talks I ever had in my life when Bradley dined on Friday. Like most talk it is impossible to give account of; but we ranged over lots of things—Shakespeare, Elizabethan dramatists, H. James, M. Arnold, and many other bookishnesses—and then got into a long talk about religion. I don't know that I got his position very clear—or mine either, indeed!—but while saying that he seldom or never went to Church—because he found the adjustment of the words to his own beliefs *too* great for habitual use—he quite understood and agreed with the view that, religion being the greatest of realities and one which no words can state, we do well, if we can, not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together and to use the accepted words with such adjustment as we can. And he himself prays, he told me, and at such times uses, I gathered, the old words, some or other of them. And he was very strong in pointing out that no thinking man could expect any form of words exactly to express what he individually feels—and therefore in *any* case even among the orthodox there must be adjustment. His is a most attractive mind to me, but perhaps too aloof and philosophical.

To his Wife

6, Sydenham Terrace,<sup>1</sup>  
Newcastle-on-Tyne  
October 23, 1917

... You will have had my little card written on the way up from the station yesterday. I found tea and after a few minutes my host: then bath and looking over my notes, dining and down to the Hall where I had a good audience—a good bit larger than before: and the lecture seemed to be a great success, often interrupted by applause. You will remember that I felt last year W.H.H. did not himself care for the lecture, though he spoke of my having the audience absolutely in my hands after the first two minutes. This time he greeted me with “I don’t think I have ever heard a more interesting lecture” (or some such words); and all spoke in the same strain. It is, I think, as you always say, the best of my lectures. There is quite a good little paragraph report of it to-day in the local paper—which he says is very rarely done for these lectures. Altogether it went well. I shall stick to lecturing. It seems to be a thing I *can* do.

... Hadow very interesting about what I said in my lecture (you may remember) as to the unclassical inadequacy of books like *Imitation*, M. Aurelius, Dostoevsky novels, etc., as giving no fair place to the natural man, the ordinary contented and happy life of most men and women, and of the body, etc., that life which, as I said, the classics touch to a new interest and beauty, while these rigid spiritualists try in vain to deny and destroy it. He says he horrified a clerical audience by saying that the man who first classed together in a common condemnation the world, the flesh, and the devil, was a medievalist doing the work of the devil. “God so loved the *world*” and “no man ever hated his own *flesh*.” Such things are not said of the devil: and what is good as well as bad ought never to be confused with what is merely evil.

<sup>1</sup> Where he was staying with Sir Henry Hadow (then Principal of Armstrong College, Newcastle), and lectured to the University on Don Quixote.

*From the Diary*

January 11. Hadow arrived for breakfast. He told a story he had from a friend of his who captured a German officer and got into touch with him. The German said, among other things: "It will be ten years before any of us can set foot in France again. It will be twenty before we can set foot in Belgium: it will be fifty before we can set foot in Austria." A curious illustration of the feeling between the allies.

*From Sir Edmund Gosse, referring  
to his "Life of Swinburne".*

17, Hanover Terrace,  
Regents Park, N.W.  
January 30, 1918

MY DEAR BAILEY,

You have written me a beautiful and a precious letter, for which I am very grateful.

The fatuity of the Swinburne family, something venal and odious in the partly virtuous character of Watts-Dunton, Swinburne's own strange habits—these combined to make the biography of the poet like the path that Christian had to traverse in the *Pilgrim's Progress*.

Your remarks about S.'s mind and genius in this letter of yours show real intuition. I wish you would write a complete study of him: it wants doing by some master of criticism, and we have so few.

I wonder what you will think of his *Letters*, of which I am bringing out (in concert with T. J. Wise) two volumes. They only express him in part, but they are interesting, I think—so ardent and gracious, as indeed above all men he was.

I must inflict on you no more, but with repeated and most cordial thanks, sign myself.

Yours sincerely,

EDMUND GOSSE

*From the Diary*

February 10. To the Royal Hospital, where I told what I had been hearing of Morley and Rosebery, which led to talk of Rosebery saying his *Pitt* had been written by "Billy Johnson" (Cory of Eton): a story I have often told. "It may well be my best book. I didn't write it, Billy Johnson wrote it." Katharine [Lyttelton] told me, what I did not know, that Arthur Balfour, who was not Johnson's pupil, yet says of him that he owes everything to him, for it was B. Johnson who "opened his mind". Can any other schoolmaster claim such tributes from two such men?

March 7. Had the great pleasure of getting from Henry Newbolt<sup>1</sup> the formal letter announcing that I had had the honour to be elected a member of "The Club". If I should be elected at Grillons,<sup>2</sup> which I should think is very doubtful—I am proposed by Neville Lyttelton and seconded by Arthur Balfour—I shall have attained the strange honour of belonging to what I suppose are the three most distinguished dining clubs in England!

March 22. The awful offensive continues, and with it the feeling of hour to hour anxiety and suspense, which still goes on as I write this on Monday, when the news is rather better after the awful shock of the first German

<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Newbolt, C.H.

<sup>2</sup> He was not elected to Grillons.

rush as we heard it on Saturday and Sunday. How one longs and hopes and prays . . .

We dined with Arthur Balfour, only Lord and Lady Rayleigh there. He was most charming and delightful company, of course. The talk was chiefly between Sal and him and me. He had no belief in G. Meredith, was one thing he told us, and we agreed—he and I—that the obscurity of the novels would always kill them, and that they are neither very human nor very convincing.

*To his Wife*

*The Athenæum,  
Pall Mall, S.W.1  
Sunday, April 21, 1918*

. . . I wonder what you are doing all day—whether you got to church. I stumped to Prince Consort Road and heard a baddish sermon by the curate in reply to an angry letter (which he read) from a member of the congregation, challenging him to show that Christianity was not a failure in view of the war, etc., etc. Poor man, he was not equal to the task he so rashly undertook, and made matters worse by horrors like “Brethren, are we going to chuck it? Are we going to give up the game?” You can imagine I consoled myself by holy reading after that . . . Did I tell you a *mot* of Owen Hugh Smith quoted by D. Malcolm at Mary C.’s on Thursday? They were asking John Hugh Smith what he had done the night before, on which he said he had been to a play and a supper with — and some other lady of (as I gather) mature age and dubious reputation. “Oh,” said Owen, “a sort of reversal of the story of Susanna and the elders!”

*To his Wife*

*10.15 p.m.  
April 22, 1918*

Herbert Fisher has just gone and I think I will tell you

some of our talk before I go to bed. The most curious thing he told me was of Ll. George, for whose "genius" he several times expressed his unbounded admiration. He says that it was Ll.G. who, a year or more ago, insisted on the railway communications with Italy being greatly improved, so that troops could be quickly sent from France if necessary. The Italians opposed him, saying they would never want French or British troops. Well, when the disaster occurred he and Smuts hurried out at once by this railway and at Rapallo insisted on seeing the King and Staff: on which, Smuts told Fisher, Ll.G. put his finger on Monte Grappa and said: "Why are there no troops there? That is where they will attack." The Italians said it was an impossible, a very impossible, line of attack and not worth sending troops to. But L.G. insisted in his view, and prevailed, and that is where the big attack did come; and all future visitors to Venice ought to thank a little Welshman who has never been there, and knows nothing of its history, for having saved it from destruction!

... As to the front, he was grave of course, but, he said, less anxious of course than some days ago, and like Bob Cecil he is sure we shall have another peace offer very soon: ... he said "soon", I think. He used the expression "I believe this is the last flurry of the whale before he gives up." ... Under pressure I got Headlam to admit this morning—what is really obvious—that my reports do not show any very profound or intimate or "expert" knowledge: but he asserts that they are constantly appreciated as so lucid and intelligent, just what is wanted for overworked men who have no time to discover the state of things for themselves. And Tyrrell brought me in a letter he had had from the Embassy at Paris, very enthusiastic about a recent report of mine on French Socialism, which I see is quoted very fully in the weekly thing circulated to the Cabinet and official world, a report of the different countries in summary.

To Samuel Looker<sup>1</sup>

34, Queen's Gate Gardens, S.W.

September 21, 1918

DEAR MR. LOOKER,

Your letter gave me very great pleasure.

Nothing has given me greater pleasure than occasionally receiving letters from strangers telling me that they liked my books and found them useful: and I think I value almost more than any those which have come from men like yourself. You can guess that nothing encourages a writer more than to get such letters, and I owe some friendships which I value very much to them, especially that of Alfred Williams, the Hammerman Poet, as someone named him, who is indeed a wonderful man, having taught himself English literature, and much of French, Latin, and Greek, in the scanty leisure—not leisure at all, I am afraid I should almost call it—of a worker at the Great Western forges at Swindon. He is now in the Army and writes me very interesting letters. What you say of yourself and what literature has been to you interests me very much. You are evidently one of the happy people who have been from the first given that great gift of a love of poetry and nature which can never be taken away—the highest sort of that inexhaustible love of reading, which Gibbon said he would not exchange for the treasures of the Indies.

It was very pleasant for you to get that notice in the *Weekly Dispatch*, and I can imagine your pleasure. I shall never forget myself receiving the letter which for the first time announced the acceptance of one of my articles—after many rejections. You must not be disappointed that your poems do not pay their way. I daresay there are not twenty poets whose works do. I like what you have sent me, but I do not think they would pay. They do something which is perhaps better, in bearing witness to the secret of happiness you have in you. I like your essay, too, in which you show you have got hold of the root of the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 18.



matter about poetry. The passages about nature, too, testify to the real thrill of experience. There are technical faults, of course (but only one or two), both in this and in the sonnets, and you must not be disappointed if you do not find your way to publication. That is generally a long and uphill path. The wonder and the just pride in your case is that you have read what you have read and thought as you have thought and felt as you have felt. That is the permanent possession—not publication; though I quite understand the desire to write and publish.

I will gladly look at your book on Keats, and tell you how it strikes me—if you are not in a hurry. I am dreadfully busy at present as I am working at war work in the Foreign Office, and am besides writing a book which I have been asked to write for the new educational scheme for the Army in France. I send with this two books of mine which I hope you will accept. One is the first I ever published; the other is about French poetry, which you seem by your essay to like. You have the two greatest happinesses a man can have: a strong taste for the best things in art and nature and a wife who shares it; have you the third best—children to teach it to?

Yours sincerely,

JOHN BAILEY.

*To Samuel Looker*

34, *Queen's Gate Gardens, S.W.*

*October 27, 1918*

DEAR MR. LOOKER,

I must only write a short letter as I do not manage my time, I am afraid, as well as you do yours. But I can't let your two delightful letters go any longer without thanks. I enjoyed them both so much and I feel we are getting to know each other now that you have shown me photographs of your children and told me so much about your life, earnings, hours, habits of reading, etc., and especially about your wife and mother. I was interested, too, in hearing about your religious views. I am, I think, more

orthodox than you are, though I have times of almost complete agnosticism. But I am a pretty regular church goer and a communicant, and scarcely ever vary from the strong conviction that, however many crudities and falsities there may be, indeed in my opinion are, in orthodox creeds, the instinct of faith and worship and the thought of God as Good eternal and our Father are the highest man knows, that the people who scorn religion or the Churches are much more often below them than above them, and that those instincts need exercise and expression and gain by the use of common worship and, I also believe, of ancient forms and words which have been used by good men and women for many centuries and give us a kind of anticipation of the Communion of Saints. I should call my position a sort of Agnostic Christianity, always shifting weight between the adjective and the substantive—not at all a satisfactory position but the best I have been able to get to.

*From the Diary*

November 11. The great day . . . The whole day has been a tumult of joy and of loyalty. I had great difficulty in making my way to the Foreign Office through the surging crowd of singing, dancing, shouting people. *Laus Deo!*

November 17. To St. Paul's. A wonderful service. People standing all the time, and more communicants than I suppose ever communicated before at one service there.

*From the Diary*

February 20. Called on Mrs. Gaskell, who told me Lord Milner (who is a very intimate friend of hers) had told her that ten (two?) days before the Armistice Foch, who did not then expect the Germans to accept it, and thought they might continue to resist for another six months, had said to him: "*Monsieur, c'est l'Angleterre qui a sauvé la France.*" She asked Lord M. if these were Foch's own words and Milner said "Yes."

Lady Hylton, Maidie Clive,<sup>1</sup> Henry Newbolt, and Geoffrey Lyttelton lunched; Geoffrey told me he met Sir Charles Fergusson<sup>2</sup> at the Royal Hospital the other night. F. is Chief of Staff to the General in command at Cologne. He said he was quite bothered by the number of German officers who applied to him to be allowed to serve in the British Army! They are amazing!

March 27. Dined at The Club. Kipling told us he had been struck with the number of Colonial soldiers who felt that they had for the first time been in a world which was full of life, of incidents, of variety, of memories of art and history—and who felt that they would never again be able to stay content in Australia or Canada, with nothing great in them but space.

July 15. I had luncheon at the Athenæum, and thought it was a pleasant place in which a casual luncheon gave me talk with three Fellows of the Royal Society, Bateson,<sup>3</sup> Henry Jackson, and Brown, with all of whom I lunched,

<sup>1</sup> Wife of General Sir Sidney Clive, now Marshal to the Diplomatic Corps.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Charles was Military Governor of Cologne.

<sup>3</sup> The late William Bateson, F.R.S.

and with Walter Raleigh and Sidney Colvin after the luncheon: to say nothing of others of less note. Jackson pleased me by telling me of a scientific man of business who had just decided his son should go in for compulsory Greek, as the best training, so far as he could judge by what he saw of men, and the key to so much pleasure in literature.

July 19. The great Peace Procession. We breakfasted at 8.15, and then off to the Morrisons' in Belgrave Square, only just getting through in time, the crowd being enormous. We saw it all very well, no men in mufti, no smoking, as in the Guards' procession, which spoiled that. The marching was very good, especially the British and American. Foch had his Marshal's baton and could not or did not salute the cheering crowd, nor did Beatty, but Haig did, and the Belgian general and some of the others . . . I cheered all I could, feeling with Lady Kinloch, who was there, that it was horrid that the people in the balconies should appear to be *too fine* to cheer.

October 18. Dined with Royal College of Physicians, after hearing Raymond Craufurd deliver the Harveian Oration in the afternoon—a fine scholarly performance. Old Norman Moore made me respond for "The Guests", which rather alarmed me when I got there and found they were immensely more distinguished folk than myself . . . they included Sir J. J. Thomson, who responded also in a too scientific speech, Sir Aston Webb, Lord Charnwood, Sidney Colvin, President of College of Surgeons, Chief Medical Officer of Admiralty, Provost of Eton, etc. The Banquet was very pre-war: Turtle soup, Champagne, Punch, etc.

November 3. Dined Literary. I had excellent talk with Maurice Baring whom I began by telling I had had his *Landscape*<sup>1</sup> in my pocket all day. To my surprise he said it had never sold well. We talked of Dunsany's plays, Swinburne, Tennyson, etc. I said Dunsany's wonderful

<sup>1</sup> *English Landscape: an Anthology.*

plays could never be popular, I feared, on the stage, to which he well replied that such style as his (of which I had been speaking) tells more than one would guess: people who never perceive it unconsciously like it. We instanced Synge as a parallel: and Gilbert's librettos.

November 26. I gave my Warton Lecture<sup>1</sup> at the British Academy at 5.0. I had been very nervous about it, fearing it would seem utterly commonplace, but I was overwhelmed with compliments, which were not *all* blarney, I think. Mackail told me he agreed with every word I said except saying of *The Rape of the Lock* that it was an instance of a trivial subject trivially treated. I was alarmed as I used the words, but I thought I had made it clear that what I meant was that Pope deliberately kept, as Wordsworth does not, to the light and trivial mood which belongs to the triviality of the incident of the Rape, whereas Wordsworth escapes always—e.g. from Lothbury and the thrush, or the child and her porringer—to a high world of great emotions, or rather takes them there. Of course I entirely agreed with Mackail that Pope's masterly treatment took the poem out of triviality as a work of art.

December 2. Dined at The Club . . . Dunedin spoke of a curious strike of Bishops in H. of Lords, lasting ten days—begun by Bishop of Bangor, who said he would not read prayers if Haldane, who was acting Chancellor, would not say the responses: and, as he persuaded his successor to take the same line, no Bishop read prayers for ten days and Haldane read in their place, having apparently no objection to being parson, though he would not be clerk!

December 8. Dined Literary. Colvin, who is doing a selection of Wordsworth, told me that he thought there could be no doubt that W.W. ranked fourth among the English poets: a remarkable testimony from such a Keats-lover. We talked much of Scott and Stevenson—Colvin

<sup>1</sup> On "Poetry and Commonplace"—republished in *The Continuity of Letters*, 1923.

fresh from *Bride of Lammermoor*, which he thinks greatest of all. He particularly praised Caleb, who he said was Shakespearian, while I specially praised the scene with the gravedigger, which successfully, though probably unconsciously, challenges the scene in *Hamlet*.

*From George Trevelyan*

*Pen Rose,  
Berkhamsted  
November 27, 1919*

DEAR JOHN,

Your lecture<sup>1</sup> surpassed even my high expectations. It was in your very best *style*, and as to the matter I agreed with every word. I have been feeling after just that for some time past. If people cared as much about poetry as about politics, you should be my party leader.

Yours ever,

GEORGE TREVELYAN

*From Lady Hylton*

*21, Manchester Square, W.  
December 1, 1919*

DEAR MR. BAILEY,

I am an ungrateful woman not to have thanked you before. I owe you a happy hour—a crowded hour of glorious, or rather of glorified commonplace—and indeed I could wish my days to be bound each to each by *such* commonplaces. It was a delightful idea—and won't you carry it on, it would be such fun to tabulate them:

1. The Raw Commonplace as stated by the Aunt you alluded to.
2. The Partially Transformed Commonplace (so frequent I fear in W.W.).
3. The pure, the perfect chrysolite. The Totally Transfigured Commonplace.

When one thinks what a commonplace can become touched in a happy hour by the Poets it encourages one as

<sup>1</sup> The Warton Lecture.

to the possibilities of one's own future state—even more than the lucubrations of Sir Oliver Lodge!

Again thanking you for your delightful lecture.

Yours sincerely,

ALICE HYLTON

Will you come and transfigure my commonplace teacups one day?

*To his daughter Jane*

34, *Queen's Gate Gardens S.W.*  
April 21, 1919

... I have often felt that if I had been a clergyman and preached to a school of boys or girls I should have chosen the text "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." I am sure that "a furtive and cloistered virtue" (Milton's phrase) is very inferior for most of us to a life in—but not too much *of*—the world. The first cuts all the difficulties by running away from them, and is narrow and inhuman besides—tho' there are no doubt peculiar natures who become saints through it. Soon you will have all these problems to decide more and more for yourself: very likely—almost certain—you will not in the end decide them all as I or even Mother would. But I hope you will for some time yet feel that you like to listen and even generally to follow our advice, which you know comes from hearts that are full to the brim of love of you: and that then we in our turn shall not be surprised or hurt, if, as you grow up, it turns out that your views of some or many matters are not the same as ours.

I hope perhaps I shall see you before the G.D.A.<sup>1</sup> week, but if not I hope you will enjoy it. I hope it will not be too concentrated or absorbing; there is a danger of getting too self-conscious and over-absorbed in religion as well as the commoner danger of being indifferent. Introspection is very easily carried too far, and many of the very best

<sup>1</sup> Girls' Diocesan Association.

lives (like Walter Scott's) are healthily almost unconscious of being good at all. It comes as natural to them as the growth of a flower: and they would avoid scruples as a disease.

Well, this has become rather a serious letter, but I hope you won't mind it. . . I am sorry you made such a mess of the croquet and of your hand at bridge. I can't think how you managed to be beaten with 7 *spades*—unless your partner had none at all.

*To his Wife*

34, *Queen's Gate Gardens, S.W.*  
April 30, 1919

. . . I went to The Club and sat between Oman<sup>1</sup> and Hugh Cecil. The latter was very good company. We talked of Prime Ministers, L.G. and Asquith (who he thinks will come back and perhaps be P.M. again if he lives) and his father and A.J.B. He is inclined to think L.G. will end by leading an Imperialist Conservative party!—which surprises me. He says they *did* appoint that Commission to advise L.G. about Church patronage: but they went to breakfast with him, against H.C.'s advice, and he talked them all round. . . . He thinks all Prime Ministers ultimately get tired, and show it chiefly in loss of decision: e.g. Asquith. Mr. G. he thinks the only exception, to which I added Palmerston, but he said Palmerston dared not fight Gladstone in his last years.

*To Samuel Looker*

34, *Queen's Gate Gardens, S.W.*  
May 15, 1919

DEAR LOOKER,

Many thanks for your long and interesting letter. But I can't have you wasting your scanty leisure on copying out long lists for me. Not that I am not interested, as well as amazed, and I might say as usual lost in admiration at the

<sup>1</sup> Later Sir Charles Oman, M.P. for Oxford University.



extraordinary number of books you have read in these few months—twenty times as many as I have! I find you and I agree nearly always about the books, i.e. those I have read. I have always wanted to read more of A.E., and must get his *Divine Vision*, though he is generally a little above my head. The only book I much disagree about is your severe verdict on my old friend Wilfrid Ward's *Personal Studies*. I think his study of Mr. Balfour a very brilliant piece of psychological analysis. But the fact is that, caring for better things, you do not care at all for society and politics and ecclesiastical biography, which were Ward's subjects. You would like his beautiful life of Aubrey de Vere, I think, though.

... You talk of Gray. I took my younger daughter to Stoke Poges and his church and grave on Saturday, and we had a very happy time reading the *Elegy* together in the churchyard and looking at his grave and his pew and the whole interesting church and the young green of the trees, and some pink flowering trees and the birds which were singing all about, and the white clouds sailing in the blue: all just the things he enjoyed so himself. We had tea at the cottage close by, and then she came home and I went to Eton for Sunday.

... I quite agree about "working-man poets." It is like "soldier-poets." One is a poet or not. When one reads a man's poetry it is interesting to know something of his life: but the fact that he wrote it in a shop or in the House of Commons or in the trenches does not make his poetry better or worse.

*To Algernon Cecil*

34, Queen's Gate Gardens, S.W.  
May 7, 1919

MY DEAR ALGERNON,

Thank you very much for your letter. I was touched by your finding time in all your anxiety and sorrow<sup>1</sup> to

<sup>1</sup> Referring to the recent death of Mr. Algernon Cecil's mother, Lady Eustace Cecil.

write twice to me, and by your being willing to tell me something of what you were feeling and suffering. I never saw your mother except among other people—so that I knew her only very little—but I can guess from that little and I hope from the imagination of sympathy something of what you are going through. But now that, as you say, the “decree is fixed”, I hope you are able increasingly, as you also say, to realize that your case is one for thankfulness too, and one of which the fit thought is: Nothing is here for tears—at least for tears of any bitter sort. Few lives, I suppose, have continued so long as your mother’s, and in unbroken good fortune and happiness. How very few married persons live to be near eighty without encountering the loss of husband or wife or child! In the midst of your inevitable sorrow there will be, I expect, more and more the sort of feeling which expresses itself in the image of the ease and beauty of the falling of ripe fruit. Of course that applies only to death as seen from this life’s point of view: a point of view we cannot, any of us I suppose, avoid taking in part. Of the other it would be worse than presumption for *me* to talk to *you*. It is these moments that such a “sure and certain” faith as yours must make its blessing supremely felt.

I can still remember as if it was yesterday my childish bitterness of regret that my mother had quite misunderstood a trifling action of mine, which seemed an act of neglect of which I was quite innocent but could not explain. And I remember our passionate prayers and love and grief for her. I had not time to incur the danger of which you speak, and of which I should think you never ran great risk, i.e. of taking a mother as a thing of course. But I expect in one way our experiences may have been alike. Certainly I owe nearly the whole of whatever original impulse to good I have known to the strong impression my mother made on me—and I daresay it may be the same with you.

So, just like you, when other sorrows came to me later on, I found Tennyson a great comforter. The copy of *In*

*Memoriam* I often use to-day and have in my bedroom bears the date of my father's death. I know no religious poetry which moves, strengthens, and calms me as his does. -In some ways Wordsworth has for me what M. Arnold called a greater "healing power", but it is not nearly so religious a healing. Tennyson's profound belief in God and immortality and the wonderful expression he could give to it have, as you say, a gift for speaking to us in these moments which I think no other poetry has. Good-bye. Don't think of answering this. I have very nearly torn it up. It is not what I wanted to say. But I did not quite like to receive your letter in silence, and wanted besides to say that I felt your letter an act and proof of our friendship, which I hope will live and grow whatever opinions divide us.

Yours affectionately,  
JOHN C.B.

*To his Wife*

1, Savile Road,<sup>1</sup>  
Oxford  
July 19, 1919

... I love coming to Oxford—all the people here suit me so well—their ideals of life are mine and mine are theirs: and the air of ancient peace and culture attunes with my soul altogether. It is perhaps doubly so to-day when one's head is filled with the alarms and worries of the newspapers at the Socialist man getting in in Colne Valley. Here at least one seems entirely outside these sordid struggles of classes, one fixed on grasping, and the other on retaining, the material good things of life. I don't mean that I can look down on them—far from it—no one less—I think far too much of these things: and it is because I do that the Socialist writing on the wall is so disquieting to my complacent optimism. Not that it is mere selfishness that rejects their theories—I don't believe

<sup>1</sup> Where he was staying with Mr. and Mrs. Matheson.

Socialism would make for the happiness or liberty or goodness or wealth of the poor, and I feel sure it would prove a particularly burdensome and odious kind of tyranny to the whole nation, and destroy all real moral and spiritual life. But what I am ashamed of is that that is not the principal thing that is occupying one's mind. One is thinking that one does not wish to be less rich and comfortable than one now is. "Where your treasure is," etc. One's heart is too much—far too much—set on the material ease and abundance that one now enjoys—just as the hearts of the people—as religious sanctions have less power over them and the old literal other-worldliness decreases—are more and more set on sharing these good things. And what we both ought to learn is to set one's affections on things that no political changes can give or take away. I am not thinking only of what a saint would mean by that. I am thinking that if I lived up to my best moments of faith in poetry and art I should be able to say with honest and perfectly genuine cheerfulness to myself: All that is very little to me—the utmost social changes they talk of cannot touch the things I really care about and live by. They can at most make me dine and sleep a little less agreeably, but they can't deprive me of one atom of my delight in Wordsworth and Shelley and in Greek sculpture and modern landscape. That is what culture—the real culture—ought to be able to do for one if we were really whole-hearted and sincere in caring about it.

*To his Wife*

34, Queen's Gate Gardens, S.W.  
August 12, 1919

... I sat in the Matheson garden alone (it looks lovely with clematis, great purple petals, and some good roses): and went over my lecture once more. Then I walked to tea with the Fowlers, who had asked various persons to meet me, and so to the Lecture, which judging by my own feelings or impressions and by the fervour and length of

the applause must I think have gone off pretty well. I felt at ease, and was able to drive my points home.

... After breakfast this morning Lily<sup>1</sup> and I went into Wadham and saw some things I never saw before, and so to the Gallery where we were very happy all the morning with Greek vases and Italian porcelain and M. Angelo drawings and Greek sculpture: and after she had gone I fell in with Hogarth<sup>2</sup> and Sir Arthur Evans and P. Gardner, and they showed me the two wonderful new Greek things which we had failed to find, and I listened to these learned men discussing them. All a very happy morning as you can guess. Why is the world so foolish as to crowd to cinemas and political meetings and leave these heavenly homes of delight untenanted?

From Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Tardebidge Vicarage,  
Bromsgrove  
December 17, 1919

... I hope you were pleased at having a Poem written on your lectures on *Poetry and Commonplace* by so great a man as Mr. Punch. But I doubt you are too blasé with the sugared flattery of the coteries. Well for you that you still have in my person a Mummy at your Feast! I like your Landorlette.<sup>3</sup> But when you talk about his nobly praising Dante you might have given us some of the noble praise, which I find absent. It seemed odd at first glance to have the "fire of life" lines given for January. And the casual reader will still think it so. But I take it you mean to give the keynote of W.S.L. at the outset.

If you read this to Sarah tell her that the Dilettante Parson of her vain imagination has been saying Mattins in a cold church while she was breakfasting, practising carols in his School, dealing with horrible "charities", taking a

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Matheson.

<sup>2</sup> David Hogarth, Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum.

<sup>3</sup> *A Daybook of Landor*.

funeral (thick mud on his boots), and has now subsided into an armchair to gather force for a Committee Meeting on sundry important Little Pedlington affairs. But I like her to think me a Dilettante Parson (I don't attribute the phrase to her—it merely crystallizes the conception I gather she has of me), it pleasantly tickles my sense of humour. Truly the problem of rendering *Nox est perpetua una dormienda* goes with me often as I bicycle about my parish and does interpose a little ease from the detail of *parochialia*.

Well! now I am refreshed because I have enjoyed myself by sticking small pins into you both, and I now return to my avocation of busy bustling Parson.

Jacynth is getting up a play, as she may have told your girls. This promises to be a nightmare for the House of Tardebigge for a week or two to come.

You see how sprightly a little self-conceit has made me. . . . Fancy £15,000 for *Venus and Adonis*, etc. I am treasuring the *editio princeps* of *Studies in some Famous Letters*.

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

34, Queen's Gate Gardens, S.W.  
December 21, 1919

MY DEAR FRANK,

A capital letter indeed! I greatly enjoyed it, and so did the family. You must please arrange for me to survive you that I may assist Margaret to publish your letters (omitting "impertinences" of course) and with an introduction which may serve as the opening essay of a new volume of *Studies in Some Famous Letters*! You should exercise your talent more frequently and not necessarily expect replies from those who do not share it.

There! There's honest butter for you, not margarine at all, and don't say I can't spread it eloquently.

. . . Now love and good wishes of all sorts to you and Serena and Jacynth (who writes an amusing but very illegible letter to Jenny) for Christmas and New Year.

Yours aff.,

JOHN C.B.

1920

To Samuel Looker

Wramplingham Hall,  
Wymondham, Norfolk  
January 11, 1920

DEAR LOOKER,

(You mustn't write to me "Dear Sir." It seems such a long way off—we have got nearer than that, I think.) I have been a long time writing to thank you for your book of poems, but I have kept them to read here where I came on Wednesday. I return to-morrow if these troublesome railwaymen will let me.

I have enjoyed reading your book<sup>1</sup> with all my heart. It is rather carelessly printed, particularly as to stops, and if you get to a second edition I will show you some that should be put right: e.g. the break where there is no break between the third and fourth paragraphs of your striking preface. I liked that very much: it's so entirely you, and yet as universal in truth as it is personal in experience. I like particularly the last paragraph, which is so much what I tried to say in the lecture you heard. And then the poems. I can't discuss the ones I like: there are too many of them. . . . I can quite guess the feelings you describe at seeing them in print—I have felt the same myself at seeing in print things very far from being poems and utterly inferior to them. But there is that joy even in the humblest kind of "creation": any feeling or even opinion of our own which we can get expressed in anything like the right words gives us an even more exquisite pleasure than that of the craftsman who has made a clock or a box to his heart's content.

<sup>1</sup> *Dawn and Sunset-Gold*, Poems of Love and Nature.

... What you say of Davies is exactly what I feel. He is *delightful*, but he has no great unifying and uplifting sense of the Universal such as all the great men, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, etc., move us by. Your sentence "Davies has loveliness, De la Mare loveliness and enchantment and mystery" seems to be the exact truth. As you say, the great thing in life—and in poetry—is some form of what St. Paul calls "the Peace of God which passeth understanding", and is unassailable (if we will keep our hearts fixed to it) by any temporal or material anxiety or losses.

*Tardebigge*

*From Rev. F. G. Ellerton*

*February 25, 1920*

Something like a letter! Most refreshing to have you "stretch out your legs" and discourse like that. Needless to say it provokes rejoinders. I will note points, for there are many.

... No, I *don't* think [Tennyson's] "Sleep" "one of the loveliest lyrics in the English language".<sup>1</sup> If I must bruise a butterfly on the wheel, I don't like "whate'er", especially twice over—it is *not* the word in that type of poem. No, it isn't. Nor do I see the point of the last line—it is banal if it only means what it seems to mean. Nor do I like "to sleep". Nor does A.T. show his usual admirable felicity of vowelling. Nor is line two happily expressed—very Tennysonian but not good. No, it doesn't "run" well though no doubt you might make something of it by reading it aloud. I am tiresome, am I not, and captious? But when you praise a pianoforte song like that in the way you do, I must really protest. "Commonplace" without the "poetry"! There. Now stamp up and down your Turkey rugs. But that is what you do—you sometimes strangely get possessed with a piece which is well enough in its way, and laud it as though you were *Swinburne* writing, not the judicious J.B.

<sup>1</sup> Quotation from *Poetry and Commonplace*. See p. 190.



Many thanks for the Working Man whom I shall read with joy. No time yet.

*Finis coronat opus* means that your Hobby Horse got the bit between his teeth in the last page or two and ran away with you. The "side of the problem" which you do not discuss happening to be the most important side, you should not have stressed the other side so strongly. As I said before, you spoil your perfectly excellently stated case by over-stating it, and that I adhere to in spite of the "irresponsible, indolent reviewers", who have given you so many sugar-plums. But I do think, as I said, that it is a most excellent lecture and "very wholesome for these times".

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

34, Queen's Gate Gardens, S.W.

March 5, 1920

MY DEAR FRANK,

I feel inclined to write to you to express my great regret that we did not discuss your last admirable (and also most generous and encouraging) letter. I had it all ready and then you came in too late for talk: flirting, I fancy, with one of the young ladies, who haven't always agreeable clerics even when they are no longer young! You *did* say a lot of *nice* things, with some critical ones, both of which I should like to have discussed. I was reading poetry yesterday for a charity in a drawing-room (Milton to To-day: selections) and in obedience to you I read *Time* as well as *Blest Pair*: but I can't think that *Time* is at all the equal of *Blest Pair*. It has not its soaring quality: nor that amazing Miltonic power of keeping on the wing all through one single flight of music. I read Keats's *Hymn to Pan* among other things. My poets were Milton, Dryden, Blake, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Tennyson, Swinburne, Bridges, and De la Mare. I had to leave M. Arnold out.

I like your large and bold idea for a book on the great poetry of Greece, Rome, Italy, France, and England—very

ambitious but just the thing I should like to do it if there were anything left to say. Shall we call it *The Great Tradition*? At Cambridge, where I gave my last lecture for this term on Thursday, I was told by a lady of the conclusion of a lecture she had heard F. Myers give on W.W. "Homer is like the sea: Virgil is like a fruitful field: Dante is like fire: Pindar is like wine: Wordsworth is like water: but only the soldier who has fought, and has been wounded, in the battle of life knows how much water is the best of all things."

Rather a fine rhetorical ending; and truth behind the rhetoric.

From Sir Edmund Gosse

17, Hanover Terrace,  
Regents Park, N.W.1.  
April 14, 1920

MY DEAR MR BAILEY,

Thank you for your very kind and interesting letter. I am gratified that you have been pleased with my Reminiscences of H.J.<sup>1</sup> in the *London Mercury*. These will be continued and concluded in the next number (May). It is rather a pity that they are mixed up with the publication of the Letters, which they were intended to precede, but no matter.

I can cap your entertaining recollection by another, which I dared not print: H.J. was complaining to us that Ellen Terry had asked him to write a play for her, and now that he had done so, and read it to her, had refused it. My wife, desiring to placate, asked: "Perhaps she did not think the part suited to her?" H.J. turned upon us both, and with resonance and uplifting voice replied: "Think? *Think?* How should the poor toothless, chattering hag THINK?" The sudden outpouring of improvised epithets had a most extraordinary effect. A crescendo on "toothless" and then on "chattering" and then on

<sup>1</sup> Henry James.

“hag”—and “think” delivered with the trumpet of an elephant.

The letter addressed to you in Vol. II is a particularly excellent example, but they are all, in their mass, very remarkable. I do wish you would make them the subject of a study in the *Q.R.* or the *Edinburgh*. I feel with you that H.J. is being treated too solemnly, too hieratically. You would add a lightness, although I think Percy Lubbock's introduction, from a sacerdotal point of view, about as good a thing as could be produced.

Yours sincerely,  
EDMUND GOSSE.

To Samuel Looker

Stocks Cottage,<sup>1</sup>  
Tring  
August 20, 1920

DEAR LOOKER,

I have never thanked you, I am afraid, for the long and interesting letter you wrote to me on July 12. I have read it several times and meant to write to you before this. I was interested in the poem you copied from Clare, and all you say. Like you, I have always been fond of autobiography, and always think that one of the reasons why Boswell's *Johnson* is so easily the best of all biographies is that there is so much about Boswell himself in it. The professed autobiography which I love beyond all others I think is Gibbon's *Memoirs of my Life and Writings*—so full of his humour, cynicism, love of letters—and love of the comforts and luxuries of this world! When I have read a book which is exclusively spiritual—“too good for human nature's daily food”—(*Brothers Karamazov* for instance, I remember) I turn with pleasure to the Epicurean and purely intellectual, *not* spiritual, Gibbon. . . . Benvenuto Cellini's autobiography is very entertaining: a genius and a scoundrel!—and equally pleased with himself in both characters.

<sup>1</sup> Which we had taken from Mr. and Mrs. Humphry Ward for the summer.

To his daughter Jane

Stocks Cottage,

September 15, 1920

MY DEAR JENNY,

I have been dictating to Mother this morning, but I think I must take my own pen to write to you! Our writing paper is finished, the rain is falling, the wind is blowing, our prospect for tea is that of the unexciting old —: we have neither sunshine nor gaiety nor daughters! They ought—your mother thought—to have been with us at breakfast—at which meal we had the cold company of the Poulter Trust . . . and we ate our porridge in universal gloom. . . .

I hope you are enjoying yourselves and getting and doing good. We want to hear all your feelings as well as your doings. I daresay Mother has told you of our quiet doings on Monday. Tell Evelyn that Miss "Food Controller" was rather reserved when I tried to draw compliments from her about my youthful appearance: and on the whole our conversation was rather serious than playful. But we again liked her very much. We had a most happy and lovely walk yesterday to the Wheatleys, wandering on purpose a roundabout way through the park and looking at the yellowing trees and the deer. Our tea was very lively. I was placed by order next the old gentleman, who talked politics: and turned out, too, to my surprise to be a great reader of the *Literary Supplement*. Who could have thought it? *Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?* None I should have thought less likely than that old Colonel's mind, to which I certainly did less than justice.

*From the Diary*

March 1. Dined Literary. A large party. I sat between Arthur Balfour and Herbert Fisher and had very pleasant talk. A.J.B. was as usual most charming, and we were all saying how young he was and how quick at taking

up and welcoming whatever was said. Our talk ranged over French plays—he remembered *Les Surprises du Divorce* with enthusiasm and asked me if Hachette could get him a copy—George Wyndham, Wilfred Blunt, whose abuse of confidence he thought scandalous—in revealing G.W. and Winston Churchill's private conversation, all three being still alive—the French Railway Strike, where he quite approved of the arrest of the leaders as guilty of an attack on the community, but was not sure if it would work so well in England. He also talked of Briand, whose cleverness delighted him. He had not liked to dine with him too often in Paris, as Clemenceau might be offended. A.J.B. said his good nature, if he might call it so, had been disastrous to two of his best friends. He had wished to remove George Wyndham from Ireland, when he reconstructed his Ministry, and put him at the War Office. He felt that G.W. had done his work in Ireland, and if he had insisted he would have saved G.W.'s career from collapse. So with Curzon. He would have saved the fiasco of the second term if he had acted on his own judgment and refused to allow it.

March 2. Dean of St. Paul's lunched here and we walked together. A good talk about politics, war and peace, and still more about Christianity. He definitely holds the view, like v. Hugel—that the Fourth Gospel is an allegorical and mystical book, not a record of facts. I said it always seemed to me full of details of eye-witness observation. But he won't have it. He says the great Cambridge scholars never pursued their thoughts to the end. There was a point at which they (Westcott & Co.) always "stopped short" and pulled themselves up; a point at which what they considered to be "loyalty" forbade further following of truth, or at any rate further discussion.

June 7. Dined Literary: a very pleasant evening. Dunsany and I discussed Walt Whitman and *vers libre*, Don Quixote, etc. He said Cervantes had in earlier life written a romance of chivalry like that he set out to ridicule in

Don Q. I wonder if this is true; I doubt it, as I never saw it mentioned. He thought Shakespeare must have written his more vigorous and happy things, like Falstaff's defence of himself spoken in the name of Henry IV, very quickly—art and thought would have destroyed inspiration. I doubted this, and said I thought the easiest prose was generally the result of the most intense labour. Certainly this is so in my own humble experience; people have said to me “you must have written that as quickly as talk”—the truth being that its apparent freshness and ease were the result of long labour. . . . Bradley, to whom I have been talking since, agrees with D. that the most eloquent and “poetic” speeches, such as those in *Romeo and Juliet*, were probably written *currente calamo*.

September 1. Read the whole of *Ædipus Coloneus*, which I read more slowly a fortnight ago.

October 23. Herbert Fisher dined here. He said he was at Downing Street when the [railway] strike was settled and Ll.G. invited the delegates to smoke as a sign of amity, on which Cramp made a sort of speech saying an (apparently) anarchistic speech of his had been misquoted. On which Ll.G. said: “Oh, I know all about that, Mr. Cramp; I have had a great deal to complain of from reporters in my time; *especially when they reported me accurately!*” On which the laugh extinguished Cramp!

December 6. Literary dinner. A pleasant party of 16. [Lord] Crewe, discussing the nervousness of old men, especially the fear of poverty, told me his uncle, old Lord Crewe, got to think himself very poor in his old age, and being asked what made him think so, said he found he had only a balance of £18,000 at his bank. He had always thought £20,000 was the smallest you could safely keep. Those were the days for bankers.

*From the Diary*

January 11. Dined Literary Society. Elgar said Shakespeare was always right—except once, when he was intentionally wrong—about music; whereas Browning often blundered badly in his allusions to it. He also said all modern music lacked spontaneity; he said Verdi's *Requiem* was a natural outpouring, Brahms's a laboured effort. He said Dizzy was wonderful in his prophecies about music, having said—in *Vivian Gray*, I think—that opera should free itself of irrelevant choruses, etc., and become a dramatic writing; adding: "What could not a great composer do with Othello if he introduced ballets, etc., only when ballets, etc., give occasion for them, and otherwise stuck to that tremendous story." This eighty years before Verdi's *Otello*! They all spoke enthusiastically of Meredith's novels, especially *The Egoist*; would not hear of my doctrine that his verse, though not pure poetry, will last longer.

February 20. I went off at 8.30 to give my lecture at Aberystwith [University] on "Can we tell good books from bad?" It had a wild success; the hall was crowded with, I suppose, six hundred people, many standing, and the students were so enthusiastic that at the end they carried me shoulder-high to a sort of pedestal where I had to make another speech!

March 7. Literary Society. A very large party to welcome new members, to say good-bye to Colvin's Presidency, and welcome in mine. G. Trevelyan was, as usual, eager I should write a book, and not give up too much time to "endless good works". I expect he is right. . . .

May 2. — talked much of Queen Victoria, who once said to him: " I must be the only person who has outlived four generations of contemporaries. When I came to the throne I lived with Lord Melbourne and people aged sixty to seventy. They died and I lived with Peel, Russell, Palmerston, Derby. They then died and I lived with this generation of Gladstone and Disraeli, and they are now all dead."

May 10. Dined at The Club. Sat between John Fortescue<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Asquith. There was much talk of George IV having been under-rated (I see since that Melbourne thought him clever) as a patron of art; Asquith and Balfour agreeing with Fortescue on these points.

April 4. Dined at Literary, for the first time as president. It was difficult to face such a dinner with any prospect of festivity with this awful coal strike and apparent attempt at revolution going on around us. But we managed to be cheerful somehow, and even I forgot my anxieties (which I feel, perhaps wrongly, even more than those of the war). I had to welcome Binyon, and had a lot of talk with him about art. He welcomes signs of revolt among the younger men against the absurd theory now fashionable that art should have no " subject " and be a mere affair of " planes ", lines, and colours. As well, he said—I was glad to hear—" suppose that a poem could do without subject, and be a mere affair of words and rhythms."

June 25. Got away at last from 12 Hinde Street [after operation]. I read a fair amount during convalescence; the *Georgics*, skipping the dull parts and reading the fine things twice; Book II of *Faerie Queene* and part of III; *Rob Roy*; *Ravenshoe*, *Emma*, *Persuasion*; Heredia's *Trophées*; *Golden Treasury* bits; much of Bridge's *Spirit of Man*; Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*; old Grant Duff's *Diaries and Essays*; Bordeaux's book on Jules Lemaître; *Mystery of a Hansom Cab* (illiterate but exciting), and a few other things.

<sup>1</sup> Later Sir John Fortescue, K.C.V.O., the King's Librarian at Windsor.



November 15. Dined The Club. Bishop Gore sat next me. He told me his father had been page to Lord Wellesley as Viceroy of Ireland, and was once waiting in his gorgeous clothes in some ante-room when the great man came in and so for a moment the boy had a *tête-à-tête* with the Viceroy. What the Viceroy said to him was: "Charlie Gore, remember what I tell you: my brother Arthur is the greatest fool on earth." On which I told him the Duke's opinion of the Marquess in the story (I don't know where it comes from) of someone bringing Wellington the news of Wellesley's death: "I am sorry to say that I hear Lord Wellesley is dead." "Well . . . and a damned disagreeable fellow too!"

From Sir George Trevelyan <sup>1</sup>

Easter Sunday,  
March 27, 1921

DEAR JOHN BAILEY,

I have read the "Continuity in Change" <sup>2</sup> with the full and grateful and rather emotional leisure of this day in the year, of all others; when there is no public news to disturb and disappoint, as seems to be the only vocation of news in these strange and evil days; and when the natural man, if he has any high impulse left in him, is inspired by the aspiration so beautifully described in *The Times* article of yesterday. Your paper in the *Supplement* in feeling, thought, reasoning, and (not least) in brevity and compass is an exquisite piece. There are certain passages which express the few things (and the fewer the better) that I intensely and absolutely believe. . . . That belief was defined as being dependent on practice; in other words, that what a man *tries* to do, and *prays* to do, and *succeeds* (according to human strength) in doing, becomes in time his belief and his religion. Self-knowledge and self-control are the two divine graces: and in the highest sense the noble line is true, that *e coelo descendit γυνῶθι σέαυτον*.

<sup>1</sup> The late Sir George Trevelyan, O.M.

<sup>2</sup> An article written by my husband in *The Times Literary Supplement*.

In the argumentative parts of the article I was greatly struck by the passage beginning with "The reaction to sanity in regard to Homer". There is a vein, however, and a pretty deep one, of gold running through it from first to last; and I am pleased and content to be able in some sort to trace it.

I remain, dear Bailey, yours ever more than before,

GEORGE OTTO TREVELYAN.

*To his daughter Jane*<sup>1</sup>

May 22, 1921

MY DEAR JENNY,

I think it's time I wrote to you again. We *did* enjoy seeing you, and seeing something of your life. I wish you liked it rather more completely than you seem to do, but really I think you will think there is a good deal in it that is very happy and very interesting. . . . To-day they are all three<sup>2</sup> gone to Kew for the day—they say they will go to church after tea, for which they return. I said I was not sure what the student of L.M.H. or the vicar of Tardebigge would think of their proceedings! You are hearing Cam Crum,<sup>3</sup> I fancy, and then lunching with the Murrays. Tell me all about that: you will love Gilbert Murray, I expect. And how did you like your dinner at Worcester and the play in that lovely garden? And your tea on the Magdalen barge? You manage plenty of gaieties in spite of that old maid Miss —, with whom we are rather disgusted . . .

I was glad to be home—the elaborate idleness of country house visits soon bores me. Now I am working on an article on Queen Victoria (I have bought Strachey's book) for my book of political essays which is to appear in the autumn. I am not sure I am wise to reprint them—it is *very* doubtful if they will bear reprinting—tho' I don't

<sup>1</sup> Then at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford.

<sup>2</sup> The three were his daughter Ruth and Margaret and Jacynth Ellerton, daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Ellerton.

<sup>3</sup> The Rev. Campbell Crum, later Canon of Canterbury.

think they were bad at the time of appearing in the *Lit Sup.* I should have written two new ones, but with this horrid operation-waste of time shall probably not be able to manage it.

I have just—since breakfast—been reading St. Augustine's *Confessions*: assuredly one of the half-dozen greatest prose books in the world: "the greatest of all devotional books" I remember hearing Inge call it. I wonder if you have ever read it. If you do, don't be put off by the first quarter of it which is rather dull. The rest is at once the romance and the philosophy of the greatest of all conversions.

I wish rather you joined in the essay and debating societies. The contact of various minds with each other is one of the best things in University life, and you are the last person to suffer much from its chief danger, the being "carried about with every wind of doctrine". Try to see more than a few people: many whose first appearance is unattractive may prove interesting. I was very glad to see you punt so well. I should learn to scull and canoe also. And it would be good to play tennis. All these things are links with other human beings of which one can scarcely have too many: I often wished for more when I was young. Still, I agree—I had to be myself and not a sportsman; and so have you to be yourself. But it is best to begin with some degree of manysidedness.

Later:

We have just been to All Saints, which was fuller than I ever saw it, and Canon Deane preached really a fine sermon on the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night: the daylight of the world leaving God in a cloud and sorrow revealing Him in the fire. Also—what was more original—the cloud of mystery which is over the daylight of truth. Theology defines dogmas, science discovers laws, but the ultimate mystery is not to be explained by either or seen by human eyes. I seem always to get into sermons when I write to you—I suppose "the schoolmaster which is inherent in every male and the preacher who is

inherent in most"! So I change my subject and fly to Max Beerbohm's delightful caricatures which we all went to see on Thursday. . . . one of E. Winton in a group of Socialists who "wish the proletariat would only treat them as mere visionaries again"! I hope they won't have shut up when you return.

*Tardebigge Vicarage,  
Bromsgrove*

*From Rev. F. G. Ellerton*

*September 6, 1921*

. . . You kept me up late the other night reading your *Milton*. Frightfully good and with a great deal of that "inevitability"—that sense of it which the reader sometimes has—which is the hallmark of first-rate criticism. Colvin always—yes, I think always—has it and lulls my combative instincts to sleep. You often, or almost usually, do. Mat. does not, to say nothing of the ruck of critics. The chief bone I pick is that you don't say enough about *Comus*, nor, to my mind, praise it properly, i.e., the right parts of it. The earlier part, *me judice*, is far finer than the *Sabrina*, etc., which I think a little bit falls off. Of course you wanted to bring out *Samson* and you do it finely. But as the matter in question, after all, is poetry, you ought not to leave the impression, as you would on the mind of the intelligent secondary schoolboy, that there is more poetry in *Samson* than in *Comus*. There isn't. More Milton, no doubt, but not more sheer poetry. As for *Lycidas*. (1) I yield to nobody in my perfect love for it, (2) and I agree about the nonsense people usually talk about plagiarism—mostly entire rubbish. But I think no one with any poetic sense could deny that not only phrases and situation are tremendously taken from the *Eclogues* (and *Georgics*) but that the *ἦθος* is too—and that is a kind of plagiarism which is less defensible. Still, in spite of all the carpings, *Lycidas* remains supreme. By the way, you oddly confuse in your words the *Hymn* and the *Ode*. Careless, careless! Otherwise it is really

first-rate, and you do his life most frightfully well and unboringly and your observes on *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* are most excellent. I must read P.L. again—I have, I think, only read it right through once, which was when I was recovering from measles at the age of twelve (or eleven) and I have never forgotten the impression it made.

To Napier Miles

34, Queen's Gate Gardens, S.W.  
November 29, 1921

MY DEAR NAPIER,

I can't help writing you a line of congratulation on what I fear is more or less ancient history now, but anyhow, it can't be history which you object to have recalled to your memory. I mean, of course, your triumph in the Carnegie competition.<sup>1</sup> I was so glad when I first vaguely heard of it some months ago, I think, but I was too ill to write letters that could possibly be avoided. Now I have heard all about it properly from Bruce and am doubly rejoiced.

It is so fine after all your work to win the public recognition and reward at last. You've had so many temptations to be just a dilettante amateur—a very pleasant thing to be but not enough for anyone who can be more—but you have always stuck to your intention to be the artist you had it in you to be: and now you have compelled recognition, and silenced for ever any fools who thought you only played with music. Heartiest congratulations, my dear Napier—again I say I *am* so glad.

I hope we shall meet again some day, but I suppose you are off at once to southern shores. I wish I was, but we have sold this house, which we can no longer afford to live in, and our address after Christmas will be 4 Onslow Gardens, quite near Bruce Richmond.

Yours ever,  
JOHN BAILEY.

<sup>1</sup> Carnegie Award, won by Mr. Miles for his *Markheim*.

1922

*To Samuel Looker*

4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.

March 16, 1922

... I was interested in seeing Davies's views, but think he is a better poet than critic. When he has written anything half as imaginative as *Drake's Drum* he may dismiss Newbolt as no poet . . . As to Kipling, I think there is nearly always an alloy of something like vulgarity in his gold—but it often is gold. Indeed, I think he has or had more original genius than almost any living writer. . . . Still, it was very interesting to hear what a man of mark like Davies says about other poets. But I daresay, like many poets (Shelley, for instance), he is quite capable of saying the exact opposite next week. Poetry is partly an affair of moods, isn't it? At one moment Milton exactly hits our mood and we laud him to the skies—at another Burns seems the only man. Criticism strikes a balance. Good-bye.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN BAILEY.

*To Rev. F. G. Ellerton*

Florence

Good Friday, 1922

... Did you know that Giovanni di Bologna (who did the much-copied winged Mercury which my father had and I wish I now had) was a Frenchman? I declare (you won't believe me) that I believe I should have known it

by his French *élégance*—he is always *svelte* and graceful and has an air of good society—in the very best sense—as have Germain Pilon and the greater man whose name escapes me (Jean Goujon—it comes back) whose work I have loved so in France, and about whom Mrs. Mark Pattison talks so much in her *Renaissance in France*. It is something very delightful but narrower, less broadly human in its beauty, than purely Italian work. They have made a room of G. Bologna in the Bargello. Then, of course, there is B. Cellini whose Perseus in the Loggia seems to be incomparably his greatest work, with wonderful reliefs in the base. How they did lavish work in those days! And how till about 1550 they might do better or less well but they simply could not fail. This place is simply a storehouse of things that are really fine art, in every street, or at least coming from every street. I had forgotten how fine the palaces were here: Strozzi, Medici Riccardi, Rucellai, Spini, and many others. It is wonderful to sit having one's tea at Giocosa's *pasticceria*—a very delicious place—where we shall be on Sunday afternoon, and gaze away from the crowd of English, American, and Italian ladies across the narrow street at the frowning height of the Strozzi palace, built for strength as well as splendour, with small easily defended windows on the ground floor, and the big iron rings to tie up horses with still hanging on its walls, and the extinguishers (like ours in Berkeley Square) for the torches, and the great windows of the *piano nobile* and the fine ones of the second floor where the Strozzi still live after *four hundred and fifty years*! Our oldest big house in London is, I believe, Spencer House, about two hundred years old at most. Sarah had tea with Contessa Rucellai in the magnificent untouched Palazzo Rucellai, and the Corsini still live in Palazzo Corsini, a vast building on Lung Arno where there is a gallery which I have never seen.

... Ruth and I have just been into the villa garden—a heavenly night—to hear the nightingales, which are said often to keep people awake. They were singing this

morning, I am told, but none performed to-night. A Portinari villa is close by, and the lane to it is said (?) to have been the scene of meetings of Dante and Beatrice.

May 7, 1922

*To his daughter Jane*

. . . It is delightful to hear how you feel about the classics. I wonder what you make of that strange, difficult, beautiful play *The Bacchae*. I read it last in 1917 and made a long note about it in my Commonplace Book. Its choruses I think shewed Eur. at his highest as a poet, and I suppose the play is almost the central expression of that side of Greek religion—the original side, I suppose—which saw the gods just as *awful powers*, forces of nature or of spirit *outside* man but not necessarily a bit more moral than he. . . . The enigma of the play (or one of them) is the insoluble contradiction between the delight of the Chorus in wild life, etc., and their praises—so much more typically Greek—of moderation, temperance, etc. Murray says Eur. means “Live dangerously, live on the heights and depths, though it often leads to a catastrophe,” but if Euripides had meant that I don’t think he could have praised moderation as the Chorus do when they praise Dionysus and Aphrodite (a *very* pure Aphrodite), and yet Dionysus glories in murder and every horror. It is all too incomprehensible. I should like to hear your views when you are fresh from it.

*From Lytton Strachey*

*The Mill House,  
Tidmarsh, Pangbourne  
May 23, 1922*

DEAR MR. BAILEY,

It was a great pleasure to receive your most kind and generous letter, and I cannot say how delighted I am to think that, in however small a way, I have been instru-



mental in bringing about your fuller appreciation of Racine. I am sure no "apology" is necessary. Of course one must be free to have one's own indisputable tastes in such matters—and equally free to change them! As to the *relative* position of Racine among poets, it is certainly very difficult to dogmatize, especially as in his case there was such a very unusual combination of qualities, and the dramatic element in him is so closely interwoven with the purely poetical that it seems almost impossible to disentangle them. The French language, which appears to me to be more *sui generis* than any other, is an added complication. One has to creep into its skin as best one can, and then, if one succeeds, one's liable to find that one's lost one's balance, and is beginning to consider all other languages with the calm disdain of the average Frenchman. I suppose it really comes down to personal sensations; and I can only say that so far as I am concerned the effect of seeing *Phèdre* acted was of that *stupendous* kind which sweeps away hesitations and qualifications completely, and puts any doubts about "greatness" out of the question. If you have not felt this—well, I don't see what more can be said. We shall neither of us convince the other.

All the same, if from disliking Racine you have now reached the point of reading him with enjoyment, perhaps you will continue to think better and better of him, and eventually—who knows?—put him on my pinnacle. Like a pious missionary, I can't give up hope that an entire state of grace may be at last vouchsafed to you!

Allow me to express once more my gratitude for your letter.

Yours truly,

LYTTON STRACHEY.

*To his daughter Jane*

*Fonthill House,<sup>1</sup>*

*Tisbury, Wilts.*

*June 18, 1922*

MY DEAREST JENNY,

Your mamma has indecently forestalled me! I intended to write to you to-day, but as she has done so I doubt if you will care for another letter at the same time—or not much anyhow. And yet if I don't write now I may fail altogether. So I will write a word or two, though I don't know that I have anything particular to say. Has anyone told you about the funeral at Hagley?<sup>2</sup> It was a great family gathering, and as — said on the Sunday before, "I know we shall really rather enjoy it!" and so I think we did. And did not feel ashamed of doing so—for there could be nothing but thankfulness that the long pain and suffering was over. . . .

Sir George Leveson Gower is the head of the Woods and Forests, who oddly enough manage Regent Street and other Crown property, and *allow no advertisements* at all—especially not those beastly night flashing things which my vulgar daughter likes—so you can imagine we get on well. . . . He made me laugh by telling me what he had said to an objectionable and very unpopular member of the Athenæum who complained to him of the impertinence of an American journalist who had approached him with "Very pleased to meet you, Sir." "Well, I admit that's not a thing most men would say."

*To Rev. F. G. Ellerton*

*The Athenæum,*

*Pall Mall, S.W.*

*July 17, 1922*

MY DEAR FRANK,

What *am* I to talk about! Your many letters are so crammed with matter for admiration and contradiction!

<sup>1</sup> When we were staying with Mr. and Lady Mary Morrison.

<sup>2</sup> The funeral of my half-brother, Lord Cobham.

I have just looked through the old ones again—what on earth, I wonder, *do* you mean, *can* you mean, by asserting that the only people in *Hamlet* who win you are Polonius, the Ghost (one of Shakespeare's weakest things, I should say—a Jack-in-the-Box for the pit) and—and the Gravedigger! And that you “don't mind a bit” when either Othello or Desdemona dies!—and don't care for either Lear or Cordelia. These assertions appear to me wilder paradoxes (in the wrong sense of that word, which ought to mean surprising but true) than anything said even by the maddest of our young critics, one of whom has just explained that the Authorized Version is not fine English prose: why *don't* you print a volume of “Literary Heresies”? It would sell wildly and you would be the crowned critic of the Cubist magazines! . . . I have forgotten B. Jonson's *Vivamus mea Lesbia*, but I remember I thought it mighty good. But that is no reflection on F.G.E., whom I also thought mighty good: and whom I like better as translator than (sometimes) as critic! You may dedicate your “versions” to me but not your “Heresies”. I suggest the late S. Butler as the man for them. . . .

Well, I went to Petworth on Saturday. But I didn't see the Aphrodite! She is in London, and I had to be content with a lovely photograph of her which is the frontispiece of their fine new catalogue. Surely it is the finest thing left in private hands: *de a certe*: and I think Furtwängler may well say she can only be by Praxiteles's own hand—far more beautiful than even the Hermes. The house is a fine eighteenth-century house, right in the village, almost touching the church where there is a sitting statue of Turner's Egremont, with the inscription *filiū posuerunt*, which invites questions, as his titles died with him! . . . .

I hope you are better. I note your last letters move *towards* sanity about W.S., as you now “can't keep your eyes off Othello” and say admirable things about Cordelia, “a mere shaft of light in a landscape”. But

neither she nor Desdemona appear to move you, whereas most of us find those two deaths the hardest of all that imagination has given us to bear. I agree about Lorenzo and Jessica but not about Romeo and Juliet: oh, *not at all!* I suppose you had my *Fortnightly* article. Are you sharpening the pin pricks?

*To his daughter Ruth*

*4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.*

*October 14, 1922*

MY DEAREST RUTH,

There is ten minutes before luncheon. Why shouldn't I spend it in saluting my younger daughter on her entry into the beloved Oxford which has always meant so much to me and will, I feel almost sure, to her?

I do hope you feel happy and eager and hopeful and a bit moved by all the interest of the new life and the beauty of that wonderful place. How lovely it must be looking to-day! I hope you'll take a look at it—with the feeling for the first time that it is *yours!* Even in Oxford you can hardly have a lovelier afternoon than Mother and I had at Kew yesterday, where we walked among the trees and then sat a long time looking at the low flat river sleeping golden in the sunshine, as if it were in a picture by Cuyp. We were as happy as we can be without you: but we miss you both horribly every hour. It makes us feel older not to have your young voices sounding in our ears. But if only you are happy you know we shall be happy too.

... I finished *Mr. Polly* last night. How very *good* the last half is!

*From the Diary*

February 13. Dined at The Club. . . . I had a good talk with Sargent about Henry James, whom he knew very well. He told me, a propos of H.J.'s hatred of Americanisms, of a scene at which he had been present when a young American girl, being asked if she would have sugar with her tea, said "Oh yes, please pass me the sugar basin and I will fix it." On which H.J. with horror, "My dear young lady, will you kindly tell me what you will fix it with, and what you will fix it to!" . . . We talked also of Oxford and Cambridge, and I taunted our Cambridge friends with Dryden, Gray, Wordsworth and Byron having wished to have been at Oxford.

Haldane<sup>1</sup> talked of Bosanquet's funeral, a very Rationalist ceremony with an address by the Head of Manchester College: praising the whole, at the expense of our Burial Service, as having been so simply, sincerely and definitely done. To which Hugh Cecil—as I expected—jumped at once, "But do tell us *what* it was that was so simply, sincerely, and definitely said at this service?" To which of course Haldane had no reply but some vagueness about the treatment of eternity as outside time! H.C. enjoyed his triumph, and G. Trevelyan and I roared with laughter! H. Cecil was delighted when I told him of A. Lang's proof that much of *Waverley* was really written by a bungler long after the real Scott was dead!

June 20. In the evening we had Valentine Chirol,

<sup>1</sup> Lord Haldane.

Gertrude Bell, Violet Carruthers<sup>1</sup> and Guy Stephenson to dinner. Chirol and I (as Fisher at luncheon) defended the Treaty of Versailles, which I called—imperfect as it was—the first Treaty founded on an ideal (that of nationality and self determination) in the history of the world. Violet Carruthers is a generous creature—but I think she made a poor case against it. On the other hand I can't agree with Chirol, who thinks we ought to have joined France in the Ruhr: on which Gertrude Bell said: "I should have been as ashamed if we had joined France then as I should if we had not joined her in 1914."

October 3. I finished the *Iliad*. . . I am less than ever able to understand what Schiller meant by saying that whoever had lived to read the twenty-third book had no right to complain of his lot in life. Both XXII and XXIV seem to me incomparably finer. . . . Critics are very dull in assuming poets must always be the same. What a vast difference between the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Lear*—between the Horace of the Satires and of the Odes! Of course there are a thousand instances, and Bruce R. [Richmond] pointed out to me a still more curious one, in the case of Hardy, who after writing *The Return of the Native* and other masterpieces wrote *The Laodicean*, which anyone would take for a youthful work.

October 7. I called on Katharine [Lyttelton], who told me that old Lord Morley's nephew (to whom he has left everything) told her that on the last occasion when Laski—the economist—went to see him he found him reading Rousseau. Morley greeted Laski with "I am wondering, Mr. Laski, whether it would not have been better for the world if Rousseau had never been born," to which L. made the safe reply: "That opens a very large question, Lord Morley." "Ah, but," said M., "when people put emotion in the place of reason they lead the world to the devil!"

<sup>1</sup> Miss Violet Markham.

To Walter Crum

October 15, 1923

MY DEAR WALTER,

I don't think I have thanked you for that beautiful letter you wrote me near a week ago—and now comes another. I was very much touched by your first—ours has certainly been a friendship which could ride some storms and need have no fears for any future that can be before it. So I wanted to say once for all that whatever judgments—it's much too big a word for me to have the right to use—I might form, I could still rejoice in what I knew was your happiness and feel for your anxieties.

So glad you like the book. The thing for which I am being put forward is the Professorship of Poetry at Oxford, for which every M.A. on the books has a vote. Of course only those on the spot are likely to take the trouble to do so: and for this reason (and others) my rival Garrod of Merton is almost sure to be elected, tho' outside Oxford he is probably even less known than I am. Of course it's absurd enough that there should be any question of my sitting in M. Arnold's seat, and I should be horribly frightened at exposing my unlearning. But it is very unlikely, as everyone at Oxford knows Garrod, and few have heard of me. A friend of mine canvassing Oriel Common Room was naturally met by "Who is John Bailey?"

I am so glad you like *Don Quixote*, especially that you should go from me to him. I don't think there is any good translation. I have Jarvis, who misses C.'s beauty and dignity somehow. I wonder whether you'll like the *Grand Style*, which I think about my best performance and the least unfit for a Professor of Poetry!

I hope you read and approved my leader in *Times* of Saturday on roads and advertisements.

How pretty what you say about my writing: and (I am sure) how needlessly modest about your own!

*From the Diary*

November 5. Dined Literary Society. Milner and I talked of Clémentceau, whom he thinks a very great man, the biggest in European politics of the last decade. (This was not his phrase, which I can't remember, but it was something to that effect.) He spoke of Clem.'s transformation of France by his complete ascendancy, reducing Poincaré and the Chamber to ciphers. Clem. had liked making Poincaré feel a cipher!

December 7. Got news that I was easily beaten for the Professorship of Poetry. I am not sorry I stood, as it was an honour to be nominated for such a post by such a distinguished body of men as my nominators, who included Bradley and Mackail, also Inge, Milner, Archbishop of York,<sup>1</sup> Bishops of Gloucester<sup>2</sup> and Chichester<sup>3</sup>, Bishops Gore and Talbot, Foligno, Julian Huxley, Oman, and several Heads of Colleges and Professors.

The battle was lost because:

1. Garrod is a first-rate classical scholar—a good reason.
2. He is a resident, and known to everyone.
3. General Election kept my friends away.
4. Some well meant verses in *Punch* by Graves<sup>4</sup> enraged the absurdly sensitive Dons, and, according to Mackail, lost me a hundred votes.
5. Because of the idea that I am a journalist, run by London.

December 14. Saw Grey of Fallodon, and he agreed to become Vice-President of Nat. Trust.

*To Walter Crum*

4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.

March 30, 1923

MY DEAR WALTER,

Your letter was a delight and a cause of self reproach! How horrible that I should have talked so much! I hope

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Lang, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Headlam.      <sup>3</sup> The late Dr. Winfrid Burrows.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Graves, then on the staff of *Punch*, later Assistant-Editor.



you did occasionally get a word in—but I don't deny my guilt. Rather I cry *peccavi*, ask forgiveness, and resolve on repentance and amendment of life!

I will send you my *London Mercury* article and the essay on Pedantry as soon as the Easter tyranny of closed post offices is over. I don't suppose you will agree, but I hope you will see that I have a case. I think there is a great distinction between scholarship, which takes infinite pains to be accurate and to do things as well as they can be done, but has a scale of values, and pedantry which sacrifices (1) life and (2) literature to a display of irrelevant, verbal, or otherwise unimportant learning—as the Revised Version so often does.

As to what you say about Russia, of course there are differences; there always are; I pointed some out. But however little the Socialists may like it the Bolshevik experiment is *theirs* in essence, everything done by the State and no private enterprise or profit. And it is fair to say that what has happened there would happen here, *mutatis mutandis*, and the changes would be for the worse as well as for the better: for an industrialized country has further to fall and more to lose. How you can think "Labour" would give us peace passes my comprehension. It is true that they *do* care—many of them—very sincerely for the L. of Nations: and that is the great hope, the only ultimate protection for France if the French would but see it. But "Labour" in the few months it would last would give us war and bankruptcy at home, and its total ignorance of foreign affairs and total unawareness of its ignorance would almost certainly produce complications abroad of the most dangerous sort. I shall certainly *not* join you in voting Labour; nor believe you will do it till you tell me you have done so. Think of India, Egypt, and all the other places where their arrival would cause rebellions or disturbances *at once*.

Yours aff.,

JOHN C. B.

*Savile Road, Oxford**To his Wife**July 12, 1923*

Well, here begins my last letter and it is almost too hot to hold the pen. To-day is the hottest day of all; a pitiless sun in a perfectly cloudless sky. Yet it is so beautiful that one cannot complain, and one is so rarely warm in this chilly world that one must not grumble if one is occasionally rather hot!

Your letter came at breakfast and was the usual joy. I am so sorry about the brooch,<sup>1</sup> but I was afraid there was very little hope. It is very sad. The little necklace which we more or less designed together, with D.D.'s<sup>2</sup> help, in those far-off happy days which don't after all seem so far off, and have been followed by a richer happiness than their own. I do wish we could get the thing back even from a thief. Some day we must try to replace it.

I had a very full day yesterday. After writing to you I went up to the bus at the Randolph and found—the old poet<sup>3</sup> (he is 79!) already in it and as lively as a cricket, though he had walked in to Oxford and walked about in this heat all the morning. Mrs. B. made me an excuse, she told me, and sent the car to meet us where the bus stops, but he soon got out and said walking was pleasanter. Then we lunched and talked incessantly till 4.30 and I did not get into disgrace so far as I could see, though we discussed all sorts of poets, and I did not always agree with or even pretend to understand his views. With the usual perversity of poets, he would not go on reading a poem of his which I liked, and *would* read one I made no pretence of liking! Their house has the *loveliest possible view* of Oxford and the Thames Valley and across to the Chilterns beyond: and all my walk home—though very hot—I was so happy in the loveliness of the Oxford towers lying at my feet and the wooded

<sup>1</sup> Referring to a brooch and necklace I had lost.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Bridges.

hills rising behind them. It is the walk of *Thyrsis* and *The Scholar Gipsy* and I looked into Ferry Hinksey Church. I shall take Ruth up it with me some day. Mrs. B. wants to know her. Dissatisfied with yesterday's lecture I worked in the evening, and in the garden before breakfast this morning, at to-day's: which, as a result perhaps, has been a great success.

To Samuel Looker

July 30, 1923

MY DEAR LOOKER,

I am so glad to hear your good news.<sup>1</sup> I hoped you might get something, as Mr. Meredith wrote back a letter which showed he had been altogether interested in seeing you and also in what I had told him about you. They are a distinguished firm, and your wonderful industry and ability have now put your foot firmly on the first rung of the ladder, and I feel sure you will mount it steadily. I am sure they are very lucky to get a man of your combination of brains and character. The two do not always go together.

Thank you, too, for your long letter about Christina Rossetti, S. Augustine, Pascal and Trollope, J. Austen, etc. Your reading is amazing. But I wonder whether you don't go a bit too far about C.R. I must look out the poems you mention. Great as she is, or rather extraordinarily fine and pure, I think she is *monotonous*. I should have thought the lyrics in *The Princess* alone put Tennyson far above her. And then think of T.'s variety stretching from *The Revenge* to *In Memoriam* and from *The Northern Farmer* to *The Two Voices*, *Ancient Sage*, *Crossing the Bar*, etc.!

Yours sincerely,

JOHN BAILEY.

Please thank Mrs. Looker for her kind message and congratulate her for me. I am sure she has played a real part in your success.

<sup>1</sup> Referring to Mr. Looker's appointment as publisher's reader to Messrs. Constable & Co.

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Hancox,<sup>1</sup>

Battle, Sussex,

August 3, 1923

... Then I believe you asked what my book contained. I wish it<sup>2</sup> could contain a dedication to you—I do wish I had thought of it: it was just the book to dedicate to you, and if I ever write another it probably won't be. And much as I love G.M.T. he is not F.G.E., whom I have known more than twice as long.

However, it is too late now and I don't know whether you would have cared about it. I had T.'s leave. The book is *Life and Art in Eng. Poetry*—the first, Clark Lecture on "The Grand Style" (I think the best thing I ever wrote), "Prometheus in Poetry" (also Clark), "Shakespeare's Histories", "Don Quixote", "A Mistaken View of Wordsworth", "Thackeray and the English Novel", and "Poetry and Commonplace". I hope it will pay—I don't hope for much more.

I was sounded the other day as to whether I would stand for the Professorship of English Literature at the East End College, which is one of the Colleges which make up London University. Sidney Lee has to resign this time next year, and my informant (truly or falsely) said he could get me appointed. At first I was tempted, partly because it is £1,000 a year, of which I am now badly in need (or of part of it); but I am told that the new Professor will be expected to lecture eight hours a week and look over some papers beside giving occasional public lectures. This is, I should think, twice or three times as much as any Oxford Professor in Arts is expected to do and I don't see how a professorial standard could possibly be maintained by anyone who lectured so often. And I hate coming down to mere *hack* lecturing.

<sup>1</sup> A house in Sussex which we took for the summer holidays this summer and also in 1924.

<sup>2</sup> A book of essays, *The Continuity of Letters*, which he had lately published and dedicated to George Trevelyan.

and teaching, and I think I am too old to begin either with advantage to others or with endurance to my elderly leisureliness! What do you say? I want some work which pays a little: most of the work I have done all my life, C.O.S., N. Trust, etc., has been entirely unpaid, as has much or most of my lecturing.

But a truce to this egotism, though as Madame de Sévigné (do you ever read her?) says, the proper subject of a letter is precisely oneself. I wish you had been with us on Tuesday when Arthur motored us over to Blakeney Point (N. Trust) and we saw wonderful things: thirty or forty seals lying on the beach, terns, sandwich terns, ring plovers, etc., in the air: and the beach and stones littered with baby terns so tame you could pick them up: there were still many eggs lying quite unconcealed on the stones of the beach, and sometimes a baby bird and an unhatched egg by its side, with a tiny white beak just breaking through the shell. There was also a *raris-sima* flower, but alas I forget its name: and sheets of sea lavender. And we glided there and back very pleasantly through my old Norfolk, with its noble churches and those "unnumbered farms, Which have for musing eyes unnumbered charms" of the poet old Fitz has not taught you to appreciate! and so many memories and dreams for me!

From Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Tardebidge,  
August 8, 1923

MY DEAR JOHN,

A really satisfactory letter from you, though it makes me retort on you your complaint of my ordinary economy of facts. You begin at the Athenæum and end in Sussex, where I am in doubt as to whether you are paying a visit to a "seat" (how suggestive the word seat!) of the nobility or gentry or are dwelling in a house you have

taken. However, that is of no importance. The post will reach you. Thank you for the *London Mercury* with your "Thackeray" in it. I don't think you have done it well—you go about and about rather. And, my friend, though it may be well to draw our attention to T.'s use of language, it is unnecessary to take us by the Right Ear and hold our faces down to the sentence as you take it to pieces. That is the sort of thing you would have jumped on me for. Quite true no doubt, but too much laboured. . . . I read about Blakeney Point, but did not realize that you could see seals basking on the beach. What a sight! The flower may have been a rare kind of sea-lavender. I think I read that there are three sorts there, and one is very rare, I believe. But very likely something else. How annoying of you to forget! I keep my schoolboys going with botany, and the other day a lad of twelve came in and spoke thus: "Please, sir, I was down with my father (a woodman) in that little coppice and there was ever such a lot of centaury and yellowwort. And there was such a lot of four-seeded tare and common tare" (note his knowledge of kinds!) "that I caught my feet in them." I am really rather pleased at having enthused a good many of them and opened their eyes to the things around them. They have discovered in this way several quite rare flowers. "The Diversions of a Country Parson"!

*To Rev. F. G. Ellerton*

*Hancox,  
Battle, Sussex  
September 2, 1923*

MY DEAR FRANK,

Your letter, your admirable letter, is three weeks old and deserves an answer to which I am further stimulated by your note to S. and by the arrival of your elder daughter. She really has come.

We go motoring all day to-morrow for Jenny's birthday. Ruth and Joan Maurice were away walking two nights last week and professed to be happy though it poured with rain.

You would have laughed if you could have seen us here. Ruth reading Horace, Jenny the *Odyssey*, and J.B. the *Iliad*, and S.K.B. various theological works! Are we all prigs? I don't think so. Much of the *Iliad*—after Bk. IX—is very dull. But I am just getting to the fine part again. I read Bk. XVI yesterday. To-day I have been reading two books on St. John—Gore on the Epistles—very good, grave, and heart-searching on moral issues, but I think he finds more institutionalism in the N.T. than there is. S. and I are going to a sort of retreat for husbands and wives at Hertford College on September 27, Normans, Fords, and others. I feel rather nervous. The Dean of St. Paul's gives the addresses.

I am glad to hear of your Flower Anthology.<sup>1</sup> I offer “As if his highest plot To plant the bergamot”, but no doubt you know it: Marvell's *Cromwell*. I will try to remember to ask Colvin or MacLagan or somebody about Sassoon's masterpieces and your Tewkesbury Raphael. Ruth says (I am going through your letter) that the rare flower at Blakeney was the oyster plant. There! find a quotation for that. I was so interested to hear about your botanical choir boy. It is pleasant to feel, as you justly can, that you have been a sower of civilization, as well as of other things, all your life. . . . Margaret tells me you have joined some select club of superior and intellectual clergy. I'm glad of that, you want company of your own kind.

Good-bye. I loved your letter with the botanical choir-boys and the churchwarden with his pigs and his motor and his good sense, and all the rest. I don't think I kiss the rod about Thackeray: in fact I'm sure I don't.

<sup>1</sup> An Anthology of wild flowers which Mr. Ellerton was proposing to bring out.

To George Trevelyan

4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.

October 15, 1923

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I have very seldom had letters that gave me greater pleasure than these generous two of yours. I feel so glad you liked the Dedication<sup>1</sup>, which at least was literal truth. But how could you think it was only your books I admired? I love and admire them, as you know, amazingly, but fine as they are, you are—what not all authors are—much more than your books! Your friendship is one of the possessions I am proudest of.

Well, and, of course, I am very proud and pleased with your liking the book. I was delighted to find you agreed both about Wordsworth (I think I *did* underrate the quickening of the Wordsworthian pulse by the Revolution experience) and about Shakespeare. I was particularly glad you agreed with me about Falstaff and Henry V as against Yeats and Masfield. No praise could give me greater pleasure than that of "making centrality interesting": the very thing I should always wish to do. And now to-day what you say about Grand Style—so generous of you to write again. What you say makes me glad I insisted on including that paper: the [Clarendon] Press own the volume it first appeared in and rather resented my taking it away for myself.

Yours ever,

JOHN BAILEY.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 229.



*To his daughter Ruth*

4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.

October 20, 1923

MY BELOVED RUTH,

After all our day together I feel I hardly said a word of the real object of our visit, so I must add a line or two to wish you ever so many happy returns of to-morrow, in the unknown long years, I hope, that lie before you. You have given nothing but happiness (except when you lose brooches! that I hate!) to me or any of us since you came into this world, and I am sure you are destined to give a great deal of happiness to a great many people in the future, and perhaps to one in particular. But we can't look into the future, only if you keep your health it seems to me you ought to be sure of an interesting and useful life. I hope that graceful pen of yours may perhaps some day be appreciated by a wider world than the "Scratch." But that, again, we cannot tell yet: meanwhile your present business is with Homer and the rest (and I am glad you find them such pleasant company), and with all the world you are in at Oxford, men and women both. I wish we could have a large tea party of all our young men and maidens some day, it might be fun: *or* it might hang fire—one can't tell. Anyhow, see as much of life in all ways as you can, before the walls of life and circumstance begin, as they soon do, to close you in and say "you shall have this thing, but not that". I hope you'll have some tennis so as to get quite good by next year. Are you a half-captain on the river?

I can't find your letter so I can't remember if there is anything in it I ought to talk about. I only have a general sense that it was a pleasant, amusing letter, like its authoress! Good-bye, my darling daughter: you and Jenny have a nice day for your day together. Mother and I are going to the Temple where Uncle Edward Lyttelton preaches.

Your very loving Father,

JOHN C.B.

From Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Tardebidge,  
November 4, 1923

MY DEAR JOHN,

Serena has written to Sarah to say how much we enjoyed our time with you. It all went very rapidly, but I feel my brain oxygenated a good deal.

I have been reading your *Prometheus* article and am happy to tell you that the effect of it is to repel me more than ever from Shelley. Your just criticisms of him perfectly express my views. On the other hand your talk about his "Christianity"—"the most distinctively Christian of our poets" (sic)—simply reduces me to speechless wonder. You justly call him an "abstract" poet and you apparently consider an abstract hatred of "wrong" to be the essence of Christianity. Had Shelley any "sense of sin"? Did he in the least accept Christ in any sense as his Master? Can you for a moment urge that he would tolerate the Christian Ethic? No, no! Your boyish adoration for Shelley leads you very far away from sanity. Your true self comes out, in spite of yourself, in your strictures. You really make me depreciate him more than I mean to by your absurdity. Then again about Dante. Is it true to say that the answer he gives is merely Job's answer? I ask with desire for a further opinion. I should have said that to Dante God is "a consuming fire", that that is the form which Divine Love takes to him—with, no doubt, very awful results, due to the theology of the times—but that *Love* in God (as in last line of each of the three sections of *Commedia*) is the solution and answer, not Job's mere submission to *Power*. And then—to speak of Beatrice's "tartness"! The word sent shivers down my spine. What a dreadful, dreadful word to use, with its repulsive associations! Nor do I agree with you about Beatrice. The allusion to the *pargoletta* is, of course, very human—but "tart"! . . . and is surely introduced just to give her back the human feel when Dante is on such exalted heights, just like the thousand touches which do the same thing in different

ways about other things all through the poem. I never think you are quite respectful enough to Dante. Beatrice (in the *Commedia*) is not *meant* to be human but a glorified spirit. Dante indicates that she is a human being, but that is all. And I take it that the *pargoletta* passage is of the nature of a self-confession on Dante's part as much as anything else. Once more, you set Shakespeare and Homer above Dante and Milton on the ground of their universality or breadth of humanity (if I quote you aright—I cannot find the place). I am not combating your classification, but am not quite convinced as to your canon. There can be no question that Milton stands below on that, but also on other grounds. But I should always say that Dante's narrowness—if you choose to call it so—is a hundredfold compensated by his unequalled intensity (extension versus intension.) Is he not far—how far!—above all others in that? Others have it at moments; Dante not merely in his great moments, but constantly.

Those, sir, are the chief points which have aroused my disagreement. Ah! and Chaucer's "ambling garrulity". My dear John, Chaucer did not write *The Excursion*, and again, tho' the words, of course, express what may seem to us a little tiresome in Chaucer, they, like the "tartness" are wanting in respect.

I have been reading Lucretius and am more than ever impressed by him. "Voyaging through strange seas of thought alone." He does make all the other Roman poets seem small—yes, even Virgil.

*Apparet Divûm numen, sedesque quietæ:  
Quas neque concutiunt venti, neque nubila nimbis  
Aspergunt, neque nix acri concreta pruina  
Cana cadens violat; semperque innubilus æther.*

... He obsessed me so much yesterday that I found it hard to compose a sermon about the Saints!

However, I must now go to Evensong and preach another, so draw to a close.

Love to S. and so many thanks for our visit and all your goodness.

Yours affectionately,

F. G. ELLERTON.

P.S.—I began this in LARGE LETTERS (like St. Paul) but have lapsed as the æstrum of criticism goaded me.

*To Rev. F. G. Ellerton*

*November 12, 1923*

MY DEAR FRANK,

I wish you were here that we could talk your letter over. . . . I don't understand, e.g. why you misunderstand about Shelley. Christianity is the religion of love: the enthusiasm of humanity, as Shelley said: the faith that Love is of God and God is Love, as St John said. Has any English poet felt, lived and said that like Shelley? I know of none. Of course, he did not accept Christ and was in no sense a Christian—but (p. 128) I was quite aware of that. He is the most Christian in temperament but not in creed or in some important points of practice. Perhaps the words "most distinctively Christian" go too far, but I think the whole context makes my meaning clear.

Then Dante. How can you doubt Beatrice's "tartness"? She is always snubbing Dante when he is adoring her; it is, as I say, the most human touch about her, though not the most beautiful. And Dante's answer? Is it not clear again and again? To all the biggest questions he only replies, "You are out of your depth and can't understand." It is all the same answer as Job gets: "Who is this that darkeneth counsel without knowledge?" I resent your saying I am not respectful to D. I do not believe I have ever spoken or thought of him except with boundless reverence. But that does not necessarily mean blindness to limitations. What does not one feel

about St. John? Yet I, at any rate, feel him one of the most *illogical* of writers: his "fors" and "therefores" seem to me to have no meaning. No doubt Dante's faith is clear: his answer is one of assurance, not of doubt: but so was Job's, I think, in the end when the Lord answers. But Dante cannot *explain* any more than Job.

Why has "tartness" *repulsive* associations? I don't know what they are. Still, all you say *donne à penser* like what you said about Browning. And I agree about the intensity of D. But that is my point: intension is not extension: perhaps such intension as D's and Milton's is incompatible with very wide human sympathies. D. has little but contempt for "ser Martino", whom Shakespeare would have understood and liked.

To Walter Crum

4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.  
December 10, 1923

MY DEAR WALTER,

Yes, it is *something* of a disappointment, for I knew that C. Bailey, one of Garrod's nominators, and other Oxford people, thought it would be very close.<sup>1</sup> And the President of Trinity had said to Riddell "with that list of nominators you will win".

G. is an able man, much abler than I am. But I think that, however markedly inferior to W.P.K., Bradley and Mackail, I was equal to Garrod *for this purpose* and superior to Warren.

I am not sorry I stood. To be nominated by such nominators—for such a distinguished Chair—was a great honour.

I shall be sixty in a month, so no more honours for me, I fear. But I can honestly say that I am very conscious of having already had many more of the good things of this life than I deserve, very many more. So I will not complain.

<sup>1</sup> Referring to his unsuccessful candidature for the Professorship of Poetry at Oxford.

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"MY NEXT VENTURE"

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But your Anglo-Catholics are greater fools even than the Diehards. I wish they'd all go to their own place, which is not England nor ever will be.

Yours affec.

J.B.

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

December 15, 1923

MY DEAR FRANK,

Well—*victus salutat*! How pretty your turning of Lucan was, the prettiest compliment this business has brought me, though not the only one.

. . . Certainly you are right. My next venture must be a book not essays. Unluckily books of my sort don't pay and it is the publicist who pays for the daughters' frocks! so far the capitalist does not.

. . . I am so interested about your book. I don't dislike your title, but am not sure you have yet found the ideal thing. Anyhow, it should be *Poets'* not *Poet's Posy*, shouldn't it?

Love to you all, you know. I've hardly said it but it needs no saying. Friendship is *almost* the best thing in life.

*From the Diary*

January 24. I ought to have been at Bristol speaking for the Nat. Trust, but did not go on account of the railway strike. I read the *Electra* of Sophocles with great delight. I have not looked at it, I see, for twenty-eight years, but I remembered it well, and read it with ease in about three hours and a half, and with interest. It is so compact, and the necessary business of the play is never lost sight of for a moment: and I see no fault except the speeches at the beginning, in which Orestes and the Paedagogus tell each other what they must know very well. I read the third Georgic the other day, with pleasure, but with considerable difficulty.

February 4. Literary Society . . . My talks were with Crewe and Grigg,<sup>1</sup> and finally with a little group of Balfour, Crewe, Grigg, and Bateson . . . A.J.B. talked of America, saying their politics suffer terribly from their prejudice against what we call "carpet-baggers". In U.S.A. a statesman once defeated in his own State is out of politics, and a man may have ever so much political gift, but he cannot enter Congress if his politics are not those popular in his own State. We, on the other hand, owe everything to carpet-baggers, A.J.B. saying he had never been anything else.

May 28. Dined Mrs. Francis Buxton to meet Grey of Fallodon and others. The talk was of poetry and Wordsworth. Grey said he would not listen to anyone laughing at W.'s clumsiness, e.g. his absurd titles of poems, unless

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Sir Edward Grigg.

he had first been inside Wordsworth and loved him. Only his lovers can laugh at him aright. We talked of *Excursion*, which I had just been reading, and agreed that the middle books were among the greatest things in English. He said you couldn't do justice to any poet without reading his long poems: he had only lately read *Ring and Book*, and it had made him think much more highly of Browning's astonishing powers. But he thinks Browning's roughness gets him credit for more profundity than he really has: Tennyson's perfection (e.g. as he said, in the opening of *In Memoriam*) making him appear less profound than he really is: it seems all verbal beauty, and one notices nothing else.

To his daughter Ruth

Wramplingham  
February 11, 1924

MY DEAREST RUTH,

Do you remember a poem of Bridges called *Last Week of February* 1890, and beginning "Hark to the merry birds"? I was reading it and other things of B.'s last night and thinking as I always do how *sincere* he is, and how exact and felicitous in his words, tho' not always happy in the rhythm and sometimes clumsy and rather obscure. But everything he writes is an actual experience of his own—something he has seen or thought or felt. I ended up with his interesting—tho' not particularly poetical—reply to a Socialist in London, "No ethical system". It is epistle II.

The result was that I thought I would go and look for all the February sights he mentions, and Aunt Helen and I have just seen the "bramble red" (I forgot to notice the "oak silver and stark" but I will see him to-morrow) and the primroses awaking from their "nursing shades" (we only saw one actually in flower but lots in bud): then a great many "hyacinth blades" pushing up: and "the tassels ruffled" of the hazels were everywhere, and the foraging rooks, and yesterday, not to-day, I heard the



thrush singing in praise of spring—tho' it is dull and damp with a sky all featureless and dead.

I watched the birds this morning coming to the window for their food, and we had great tits, and blue tits and coal tits, and nuthatches, and robins and sparrows. They looked such lovely little sprites.

From Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Tardebidge  
March 18, 1924

MY DEAR JOHN,

On Sunday night, after battling with three services and a slight attack of influenza all the time, I picked up your *Poets and Poetry* and let a few thoughts run about in my mind by that medium. I had forgotten your Scott article and was delighted to find you recalling him to us. I agree entirely with what you say and that he has been unduly set aside. Of course, his facility and externality has made him the fated prey of the school teacher of every kind. Hence I take it very largely the neglect of him by the superior person. But he can write poetry, and had more of an eye for nature than he is usually credited with. I have been reading chunks of Chaucer in my fine new Skeat which the "Scratch"<sup>1</sup> have given me 4 vols. of. And looking again at your earlier essaylet I find you better than in your later one! I wish he wasn't so unspeakably gross. But how strange that his worst *Tales* should be conceived as being recited to the Prioress and that one of the worst—the Monk's—should take place in the presence of a lady of the Manor. One has to take account of that unbelievable state of things in appraising him.

... I think I told you some time ago that I wish you would conceive an *opus* which would give you opportunity to compare the greatest poets of all time (!) in their attitude to and treatment of some of the greatest themes.

<sup>1</sup> An Essay Society, for which Mr. Ellerton acted as critic.

There's an ambitious flight—stated like that. But what I mean is taking some two or three obvious subjects as a link; some subject which would enable you to dispense with the particular and accidental in each poet (except where you want to use it) and so get at the *stuff* of poetry in each. This reads rather chaotically, but perhaps you take my meaning. When you talk of a poet being in the first rank—what do you mean? Why do you give  $\alpha$  to both Sappho and Dante? What I want is that sort of question posed and answered, answered in large measure by rather lavish quotation—a thing you do very well almost always. I don't think you must *confine* this to the quintessential lines, nor on the other hand give too extended passages, but rather quote a good number of separate ones each with the poet's unmistakable hallmark, and so by comparing hallmarks let us see what really makes precious metal. I don't see why, to take one thing, you couldn't make the *quality* of great blank verse, of the ode, the short lyric, the narrative, etc., in Greece, Rome, Italy, England, emerge in this way. How interesting, for example, to have the supreme Dante narratives set against the *Iliad* and Milton. So with a dozen other things, *but*—and this is my point—always keeping on the heights and not being led off into dissertation about Shakespearian and Æschylean Tragedy and that sort of thing, but keeping your eye, and ours, firmly set on the poetry. So easy and tempting to go off on to those bypaths—very interesting to pursue and most important to have explored. But what I want is the sheer undiluted poetry—ruling out the lower classes such as satire and didactic poetry and all that, and shedding off successive forms till you get up into the aether. Which phrase suggests that your favourite Shelley will get more than his due. But you know I don't mean *that*!

Well now, do you see anything in all this? Many lines of affinity will occur to you at once and are no doubt already pigeon-holed in your mind. And the framing of canons for Class  $\alpha$  would give you great pleasure. This

sounds all rather obvious and trite. But I don't think it need be, and as one of your dearest desires—and a magnificent one—is to bring us back to the great and the universal in poetry, why not work out your thoughts in some such way as this—*only with lots of illustrative quotation* always.

"In what Class would you place Burns, Euripides, Spenser, Villon, the best epigrams in Gk. Anthology, Marlowe, Horace, Wordsworth, Goethe, Gray, Theocritus, Swinburne? Give your reasons."

In other words *what* rules out? *What* qualifies?

To W. W. Vaughan

Black Gables,  
Hythe, Kent  
April 27, 1924

... What a lovely time you must have had in Wales! We have often wanted to go there, and if things had fitted better we might have gone on there from Hawarden Castle where we spent Easter with the Gladstones. But I was hardly up to hotels then. Both Llanthony, to which, of course, *pietas* specially draws me, and Llangammarch look very attractive. You must tell us whether the hotels were all right. I have always wished to see Llanthony and Sarah has never been in Wales at all. I wonder if Landor has left any traces? It is strange to me that so few people care for him. My little Landor *Day Book*, which I never take up without wonder and delight, has hardly sold at all. Was the Agnes Sorel and Joan of Arc among those you read? One of the few in which he gets away from himself. I thought of it on Thursday (Ruth's last night, when at her wish we went to *St. Joan*). You ought to see it: it is certainly Shaw's best work: for once emotion and imagination make themselves felt as well as the perpetual cleverness. If you go I would advise you not staying for the Epilogue which is mere Shavian talk.

... One of the few books I have read since my illness is

Pater's *Plato and Platonism*. How admirable it is, though the style is often tiresome, and how well he brings out that curious *central* position of Plato, the most Greek of the Greeks and yet the only one with a strong tincture of Hebraism; the most poetic of philosophers by far, and the greatest lover of art, and of all forms of human life and, one may say, human liveliness, and yet the severest of all judges both of art and of life! Have you ever read it? Pater brings out many curious hints in P. of what Christianity was to develop.

. . . I have not written a line for six weeks or more. I suppose part of the explanation of Byron's European fame being so much greater than his English, lies in the fact that only Englishmen can perceive his slipslop style and language. Then he is a master of *rhetoric*, and that always *carries* better than real poetry. And then he was a lord—always a great point abroad, and a revolutionary lord, a still greater attraction. And then I think he was a greater and sincerer man than recent English opinion has been inclined to allow. But only England knows his finest work, *Don J.* and the *Vision* and *Beppo*.

Good-bye, dear Will. Your affection is one of the possessions of my life.

To his daughter Ruth

Black Gables,  
Hythe  
April 27, 1924

Well, it is raining very hard, and here Mother and I sit and doze ever since luncheon: and now I think I will pull myself together and write you a line or two.

. . . I suppose you have heard more about Mods. now, and I shall be interested to know what papers you did well in. I hope you won't feel rather disappointed when you see the lists and the people who got seconds. I don't think it matters about classes much. The thing is to have got some hold of Greek and Latin and be able to read their

poets as I hope you will always be able. I expect Greats will interest you even more, above all Plato, much the most attractive and delightful person (except perhaps Berkeley—an altogether smaller man) who ever was a philosopher: *combining* so many things, an incomparably easy gracious humorous style with profound speculative power: love of art and life in every word he says, and yet the severest of men in his judgment of both: the most Greek of the Greeks and yet the only one who was something of a Hebrew too. Much of his "eristic" I find very tiresome, I confess, but when either his sense of beauty or his passionate vision of good get the better of his love of quibbling he is sublime. Oh, and Thucydides too! I should like to read the Sicilian expedition with you at Hancox! But I hope you'll be thinking more of play than of work this term, and more of the lovely Oxford summer. I wonder if you'll ever get to Islip or Eynsham or Nuneham as we used to. I think I liked the Eynsham afternoons best, you came home with the stream. Have you ever been at Godstow and the ruins of Fair Rosamond's nunnery? That's only a mile or so up the Upper River. Good-bye and ever so much love. We are always thinking of you.

*To his daughter Ruth*

*Scotney Castle,<sup>1</sup>*

*Lamberhurst*

*May 10, 1924*

MY DEAREST RUTH,

Well, I daresay you are calling it "boiling hot" as I actually got rather warm just now walking back from church. But the air still seems to me very cool and I sit out anxiously and reluctantly and armed with the poet's cloak!

I met Ernest Thesiger at Victoria Cholmondeley's on Friday, and had some talk with him about *Joan*. He is not

<sup>1</sup> The home of Mr. and Mrs. Hussey, where we were staying.

a Shavian, and agrees the imagination and emotion shewn in this play surprised him, as they did me. He says B. Shaw wanted to make (or pretended) a speech the first night before the Epilogue, saying everyone should now go home except those who would like to see Mr. Thesiger in bed! He said Shaw was very particular about their making themselves *heard*, on which I congratulated him. Thesiger defended the Epilogue as necessary to show the irony of the situation and story: "Crucify to-day and Hosanna to-morrow." He thinks you could not get the full flavour without the dream of the Beatification. But he agrees that it is not a success as staged because it does not suggest *a dream*. He thinks there should have been a gauze veil or something to make it all appear dreamy. But I think it is too long for one to be able to keep up the dream sensation, as even Shakespeare's ghosts are too talkative. V. Cholmondeley and I agreed that Joan somehow failed in suggesting the "mystic", the inspired and unearthly person, which she must actually have been.

... Did you see a most lugubrious picture of me in the *Daily Mirror* last Monday?

From Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Tardebige

June 3, 1924

MY DEAR JOHN,

Yes, I had been meditating about writing to you for a week or so. But you are quite correct in supposing that I find I have now to be very careful about my writing. You will remember that the Renaissance Bishops felt the same thing about their Latin style when forced of necessity to read so much *infima Latinitas* and to say so many masses and the rest. For it is not everyone to whom it is given to make M. Jourdain's discovery as I have! <sup>1</sup> Ha, ha!

... Now, do leave Daddy alone for the moment and

<sup>1</sup> A collector of specimens of English prose had asked Mr. Ellerton for part of an article he had written for the *Spectator*.

concentrate on *Mediterranean Unity*—not a good *title* but just the idea. I don't a bit see why you shouldn't manage the thing without any specialist knowledge. You need only delimit the frontiers, so to speak, and sketch the *ῥῆθος* of the different literatures without being detailed or encyclopædic, and then let yourself go on the big men or just such of them as you select.

You can easily unify by taking a comparative view of their treatment of the great themes of all poets—for it is poetry not prose that you are to handle—and *that* is what I want you to do, with as much detailed study of particular poets as you have a mind for. I am glad B.R. approves, but I beg to state that the idea is mine and I make no charge for it. Pray, think it out; you would love doing it and would do it well if you got your scheme right. I am really very keen about this. You surely know enough of Athens, Italy, and England at critical periods to provide sufficient framework without being too learned or boring—enough to place people in their environment. At any rate the environment is a quite secondary matter so long as you don't give a wrong colouring. Oh, sit down to it and it will shape itself! *Dixi*.

. . . I haven't read anything of importance of late—*should* a Standard Author read much? *Ambigitur*. But, as summer is (we fondly hope) icumen in, the *Odyssey* beckons and I *will* read some Greek this next month or so.

. . . Well, considering the value of my prose I think I have dealt with you generously.

(This letter is copyright, I had better say, in all English-speaking lands.)

*From Rev. F. G. Ellerton*

*Tardebigge*

*June 5, 1924*

MY DEAR JOHN,

... This is indeed a blow! Yes, it is the same lady.<sup>1</sup> My theory is that it is a Practical Joke, the author being probably Cyril Alington, who will play it on all his relations and friends. If indeed it is a genuine thing, on the other hand, then I can only deplore the lady's want of true perception. I had hoped that she had an eye for the hidden wells of English undefiled so that she recognized Hippocrene even when hidden in the lush leafage of *Spectator* "middles". But that she should slake her thirst at the Public Drinking Fountain duly canalized and run through pipes and at the disposal of the general herd on every—well—on some, bookstalls, and several lending libraries—this, I repeat, is a blow. But I expect it was Cyril.

*To Samuel Looker*

*June 7, 1924*

*4 o'clock*

... I am casting about for a subject for a book, but unlike you and several of my friends I always feel every subject has fatal objections to it: either already done, or beyond my doing.

... Your words "charm and grace" are exactly the right words for George Wyndham, whom I knew fairly well. He was tremendously *alive* and enjoyed all kinds of life, books, hunting, politics, etc. And he had a real sense of literature and loved it. He told me once he laid the foundations of his knowledge of French poetry one summer when he was kept in London all through August and September on duty as an officer of the Guards, and having no friends in London and not much work to do

<sup>1</sup> The collector of specimens of English prose, see p. 247; she had also applied to J. C. B.



he read French poetry all day. His failure was a certain affectation and "pose" which made him unpopular and very difficult to know.

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

November 16, 1924

MY DEAR FRANK,

Margaret is just coming to dinner, which reminds me that it is time I thanked you for your letter.

So you evoked Bywater at Oxford—among others. Did you ever read his *Life*? I bought it this year and read it more eagerly than a novel. Sarah has been rereading *Marius* since she was in bed (now up again, I am thankful to say, though very lame and stiff), and it is not long since I read some of Jowett's Sermons, of which I am a great liker.

. . . G. Dawson had an hour with Baldwin after the Election. B. said he thought it better not to have too many Peers. D. replied: "Is it necessary to replace them all by solicitors?" I am, as you know, the last person to say anything against solicitors as I owe everything to a solicitor. But you can have too many in a Cabinet. I have done the *Shorter Boswell's* Introduction and been reading Whitman (and writing some leaders!) and writing my R. Society of Literature lecture in London.

I don't think you need really be frightened about the leaders. I quite take your point and shall not, I hope, sell my soul. Two and a half hours spent on writing a leader on Lord St. Aldwyn on last Friday is at any rate a harmless occupation and brings me five guineas. And in the Election I *did* feel it was worth while and interesting to have a chance of saying one's say to a very big meeting indeed. Still, dreams of books often float through my mind and float out again. I can't help doubting whether I am the man for Whitman. For him, as Symonds says, democracy was not a political phenomenon, it was a religious faith. It is no religious faith—only an uncertain

experiment—to me. Am I too far away from W.W. to be able to do him justice? I must decide very soon. I wish I thought I had either the knowledge or the brains for what you call your book. I have been reading more Whitman and feeling his genius more, in spite of his absurdity. I *think* I shall try him. It is better to take the opportunities that come (as in other spheres) than try to do something which nobody wants done.

Please think of me as grateful for your proddings. So I think friends should help each other. I am sure I have often prodded you and I think each owes something to the stimulus of the other. But don't be alarmed. The time I give to politics and leaders is not great.

I ran through the *Poetics* to refresh myself. I wish you had been here to talk and read and tell me if you agree.

Yours aff.,

J.B.

*Datchet House,*

*Datchet*

*To his daughter Ruth*

*December 20, 1924*

... You can't have better weather or even much brighter sun than we have here this morning. Mother and I have been walking in the garden since breakfast and we dragged your reluctant sister out for a few minutes. She is a foolish child and seems *never* to have discovered the truth of the Preacher's remark that it is a pleasant thing to behold the sun. Every twig was standing out against the bright blue behind it, a few daisies were up in the grass, a few birds were singing, and a big thrush walking on the lawn, or hopping, for he does not walk after all, and all the world was playing at spring—a game it will most likely have to put aside again soon and forget for another three months or more.

We are very happy here, I think. I find the warmth of the house very pleasant after the cold and damp of

Eton. Last night the others all played Mah-jong while I sat and ran through a beautiful book on Raphael by Conrad Ricci, whom Uncle Lionel<sup>1</sup> says is about the greatest art authority now alive. So we were all happy! I always enjoy the art books of which Uncle Lionel has such a store. I have read Masefield's *Helen*, which you and J. gave me, with great delight, and the article on drama of which I thought the criticism very good and the specimen play very poor.

Now I must go to church, so good-bye; we may hear from you to-morrow—*che gioia!*

Your loving Father,

JOHN C.B.

<sup>1</sup> My brother-in-law, Sir Lionel Cust, K.C.V.O.

*From the Diary*

February 8. Called on Lady Sligo<sup>1</sup>, who told me her recollection of Paris in 1848, when Mdme. de Lamartine called on her mother and insisted in taking little Isabelle de Peyronnet—as she then was—to the carriage to show her to her husband. As they reached the carriage the crowd gathered round, shouting in a dangerous manner, and Lamartine proceeded to address them and tell them the Republic meant peace and order, etc., etc., and she will never forget the miracle of his soothing eloquence and wonderful voice as he successfully dispersed that ugly mob. About the same time she remembers looking out of their windows in the Cours de la Reine, and seeing a carriage being driven furiously and pursued by men shouting “*Voilà Guizot qui se sauve avec des millions d’or!*”

March 2. Dined Literary. My talks were with Barrie, Grigg, Cantuar,<sup>2</sup> Colvin, H. Grahame, and Newbolt. I was interested to hear that Barrie thought Hawtrey the finest actor of our time. I said I had always thought so; that he could not do and did not attempt the great things, *Lear*, *Hamlet*, etc., but was absolutely perfect in what he did undertake. (Like me, Barrie fancied Mounet Sully must have been the greatest actor of his time.) He would not go to see — playing Hamlet because he murders the blank verse, putting the pauses just where he likes, and making prose of it. His saying this, of course, delighted me, as I had battled in *The Times* and elsewhere on this very point.

<sup>1</sup> The late Isabelle, Marchioness of Sligo, *née* Mlle. de Peyronnet.

<sup>2</sup> Archbishop Davidson.

May 7. Dined with Sidney Colvin. He told me he once heard Tennyson read *The Revenge* in his deep chant—a sort of intoning with little variety of manner or expression, and he ended “To be lost evermore in the main!” adding immediately in exactly the same voice and attitude without any pause “And the scoundrels only gave me £300 for that! It was worth £500!” I don’t like the story, but record it as first-hand and oddly characteristic of one side of Tennyson. If he had said it was worth £3,000 it would have been less absurd.

June 8. Dined Literary. Very good talk with de la Mare about lecturing in America, and on the young generation; the melancholy fact that in its mouth all the ethical adjectives have lost value; he instanced “pious”, “religious”, “honest”, “honourable”, “modest”, and others, and he doubted whether this young generation—now itself getting middle-aged—has any equivalent for “honest” in its vocabulary. I suggested “straight”; this he admitted has an ethical sense, but we agreed that honesty had become a mere trading virtue, and that a poet of to-day could hardly say “an honest man’s the noblest work of God.” We then talked of Shakespeare, and so to poetry and the Sitwells, of whom he thought Sacheverell had genius, and so to the—to me—absolutely unmeaning arrangements of words used at least by Edith Sitwell, and so to the argument whether you could or could not state anything of poetry in the language of prose: I maintaining, and he ultimately agreeing, that though what a poet says can only be said in the words which he has said it, yet there is (as Lascelles Abercrombie, I find, agrees) an intellectual basis which ought to be capable of prose statement; as I said, it may be only a skeleton or bone framework compared with the living body of the poetry, but it does indicate something of what the poet has made into poetry.

June 23. Dined with The Club. — told us two *mots*; one of Briand’s at the famous game of golf with Lloyd George which caused his fall. He, in fact, could not play

and hardly moved his ball, and when Lord Riddell followed with a good shot he gaily cried, "*Tiens! Il lance sa balle comme une fausse nouvelle.*" The other was Clémenceau, on Poincaré and Briand. Of P. he said, "*Oui! Certainement il sait tout, mais malheureusement il ne comprend rien. C'est tout le contraire de Briand; il comprend tout, mais il ne sait absolument rien.*" He told me one other story, *à propos* of the Italian fleet clinging to the harbours in the war. At some conference about joint naval action where no agreement could be got, an American naval officer left the room and described what was going on as "Oh, they are all at sea—except, of course, the Italian admiral!"

December 7. Dined Literary. I never knew the talk go better. Endless good or interesting stories were told on all sides, but all that remains is the memory of such talk tossed backwards and forwards by good talkers, and what does remain loses a lot of its point when separated from the occasion. I began by talking to Binyon, who was opposite to me. We talked of the Japanese critic on Botticelli, on whom he lately wrote in *Lit. Supp.* We agreed that it was very interesting that this Jap., belonging to a world of art adored by our *lettrés* should be by no means scornful—quite the reverse—of the "representative" art which they incessantly abuse and treat as no art. I talked of Greek sculpture. He said that he had never had any natural liking for Greek sculpture and cared more for a figure on a Gothic cathedral, still more for M. Angelo, than for all the Greeks, explaining it by saying Greek art had for us no religion in it, and we agreed that it seldom attempted any moral or spiritual expressiveness—tho' I instanced the Demeter of Cnidos, and might have instanced what we know of Zeus of Olympia, in whose presence no one could sin—as I think it was an early Christian who said. He told me that some time ago he took Matisse (the very god of the idolatry of the Clive Bell school of criticism) over the B. Museum. When Matisse got into the Elgin

room he was lost in enthusiasm—I ought to add that Binyon's indifference to Greek sculpture does not begin till the Praxiteles period—and said I forget what but something of the highest reverence and delight. Matisse went on to the busts of the Roman Emperors, and remarked on their look of stupidity "*comme les vaches qui regardent un train qui passe!*"—on which Ruth, to whom I told it, remarked, "only much less beautiful than the cows!" Then we got on to destructive criticism. A.J.B. joined us. It was *à propos* of Chambers's lecture on the disintegration of Shakespeare. I said I fancied that after all Isaiah was the only great writer to whom these disintegrating methods had been successfully applied. Binyon, to my surprise, knew nothing of Isaiah, but agreed that the unity of Homer seemed to be re-established, and Wolff, Grote and Co. superseded, and we all felt the absurdity of the method of criticism which, as I said, enormously exaggerated the uniformity and consistency of a great man's mind. A.J.B. was interested when I told him of Andrew Lang's chapter dividing *Waverley* into the parts "obviously written by 'the Mr. Scott'," and the rest "equally obviously the work of a later and inferior hand!" I forget how the talk went on, but I remember we talked . . . of the Queen and Dizzy, of whom A.J.B. always expresses the lowest opinion. He said Gladstone had a real cult for the Queen, both person and office, Dizzy's was all humbug, which I don't believe, only that being always an actor he exaggerated his real feelings till they always appeared artificial and insincere. John M. talked of Emil Reich, a charlatan who used to lecture on Plato to fashionable ladies, and of whom what A.J.B. called the best pun he ever heard was made when someone called him an "electro-platonist!" We then got on to the Scotch and Irish, and their extraordinary memories, especially for anything sad. Malcolm said that not very long ago a Campbell, colonel of some regiment, told a woman that he was going to march his men through Glencoe, and she said, "it's unco soon after the massacre" (that was the pronunciation, which I did not

know). Newbolt capped this by a Northumberland story of a Mrs. Pearse, a friend of his family who lives at Otterburn and had a party to which some of the Percy ladies from Alnwick came; on which a village woman said, "I'm glad the Percy ladies came; it's the first time any Percies have been since the battle!" (which I think was fought about 1402!). On which Barrie went one better with the Grants, who say that in the Bible text "there were giants in those days" 'giants' is an obvious misprint for *Grants*! Then we talked of Horace, and A.J.B. asked if any scholar could ever make an imitation that would take anyone in. I said Jebb could, no doubt, of any author, and Kipling, Godley and Graves had at least taken the Scotsman in with their ninth book of the Odes—of which he had not heard.

*To Walter Crum*

*March 15, 1925*

. . . I am now well embarked in that uncomfortable task, which I rather rashly undertook, of writing a volume for the *English Men of Letters* on our old friend, "more than you would suppose", Walt Whitman. He had a great man in him but was also something of a democratic ass! We shall see—I shall be glad when it is done.

*To Lord Gorell*

*4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.*

*March 19, 1925*

MY DEAR GORELL,

Many thanks for your two letters and for your kind gift of your new book.<sup>1</sup> I am sure I shall find interesting things in it and I am glad to see from what Hadow says that you cheer and inspire us instead of describing us—with so many of the young poets and novelists—as living in the gutter and not deserving to live even there.

<sup>1</sup> *The Spirit of Happiness.*



To his daughter Ruth

Wramplingham Hall,  
Wymondham, Norfolk  
June 2, 1925

. . . We went on the river on Sunday, but it was very windy: and yesterday we motored to Scowton to see the famous mere, the great breeding-place of the black gull whose eggs are sold, I believe, as plovers' eggs. We walked all round it, about two miles, and when we came to the end where they nest, they all rose and filled the air like a snowstorm of gigantic snowflakes, a wonderful sight, all settling down again as we passed on.

. . . I hope you are finding Greats really interesting as you get more into them. The *Republic* and the *Ethics* are a liberal education in themselves; the one all poetry and beauty and the dream of goodness, the other all the sobriety of experience and the actuality of the moral life. I never read the *Laws*, but I believe it is curious to see how much less interesting (and how much more *sane*!) Plato became as he grew older. I always doubt his seriousness (so often asserted by good judges) in the business of the three great waves of Communism. It is not really possible that a man of his powers could believe in community of wives, or some of the other communisms, it seems to me. I can't but think they are just a very brilliant mind at play—and the brilliant mind being also a very serious one its play takes very serious things to play with—but it is *playing* all the same.

Your loving Father,

JOHN C.B.

I hope you are a punt captain.

To his daughter Ruth

July 23, 1925

. . . . I am very glad you are playing tennis and hope you will learn to equal Delia [Lyttelton]. Do you and

she discuss the philosophical problems which lie behind both your subjects? I am glad you are liking Aristotle better. I used to like his *Ethics* or part of them very much. His later history is as curious as Virgil's. The Middle Age made a sort of Christian saint out of V. and managed to translate A.'s philosophy into the terms of the Christian creed! Dante, as you know, often reproduces him nearly verbatim. However, much more foolish things have been done with the Christian creed than this of Aristotelizing it! How often it has been turned into something like a childish or sensual Pagan cult! I sympathize with you over Kant. I never could make my brain work properly in the realm of the higher metaphysics, space, time, the absolute, etc. Yet one can't but recognize that in all these problems lies the key to all thought. If they could be solved man would have certainty—which he never has as things are.

I am trying to bustle a last chapter of *Walt* so as to get done with it before we go abroad. But I foresee I shan't succeed.

Till next week.

Your loving Father,  
JOHN C.B.

To Walter Crum

4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.  
November 9, 1925

MY DEAR WALTER,

It was good to see your hand again. . . . We had an excellent time abroad: Cadenabbia (and Como Lake), then Verona (whence Sirmione, Mantua, Vicenza) and finally Venice. Only one wet day, and not a drop while at Venice. I heard a good deal of Mussolini's sins, but I hope his repentant actions after the Florence outrages were of good augury and that his own escape will show him that violence provokes violence. Still, I think it is absurd to compare Italy with Russia. There is no Cheka nor anything corresponding to it in Italy. I don't approve

of Fascist bullying or suppression of opposition, but it is a very different thing to the deliberate official murder of one eighth of the population and that the best part, which I suppose is about the truth in Russia. I was talking to Bateson, the F.R.S., the other day about it. He, tho' a strong Tory, went to Russia for a University celebration this summer and was fêted and buttered to any extent—but not deceived. He says they took good care of their works of art and have greatly enriched their museums by the things they have stolen. They leave the keepers more or less in rags, with one Communist spy adjoined to them.

I won't say more. I am very busy over struggling about Ashridge<sup>1</sup> (of which we shall get a good small bit, not more I fear) and finishing *Whitman* proofs. I hope the Dictionary will sail into port next year. I am confident that with your gift for *labor improbus* it will not fail.

Yours aff.,

J.B.

Let me know if you do come up.

<sup>1</sup> Referring to the recent acquisition of part of the Ashridge estate by the National Trust.

1926

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Bedford Hotel,  
Brighton

... I enjoyed your further *studia Miltonica* and am rather struck with your ingenious suggestion about "starry threshold" and "starr'd". But what *does* "starr'd" mean? You didn't at all convert me about "Avenge O Lord"—one of the noblest pleas for martyred truth ever written. I am surprised at your apparently not including Isaiah among "the greatest". I think both Isaiah and Milton come out better in wrath than Dante, for their wrath is national and religious—Dante's often the party (and therefore petty) wrath of a Ghibelline or a "White". But we will talk when you come.

I return to London to-morrow afternoon to eat my sixty-second birthday dinner with S. and J.

Yours aff.,

J.B.

To his daughter Jane<sup>1</sup>

Llanthony,  
April 15, 1926

MY DEAR JENNY,

A few words after luncheon—which was exceedingly plain: just cold mutton, cheese and pickles, *et rien de plus*,

<sup>1</sup> Who was travelling in Greece.

*pas même pommes de terre!* to the wrath of the barouche<sup>1</sup>—justified wrath I do think, and mamma proposes to see that “this does not occur again”. However, we bought a lot of fruit on our way through Abergavenny yesterday and our cheese and mutton were both good, so we did all right.

Before luncheon we had a lovely walk rambling about the hills—remarking that you would have tried to keep us in the road (you observe the sisterly touch) and mamma climbed more than one stile, and dogs barked and lambs bleated and we were altogether very rural and happy.

The flowering trees, apples, blackthorns, etc., are all coming out, quite as forward as they ordinarily are in Italy at this time. It is, I think, the very loneliest place I ever was in, valleys between great moors—you may almost call them mountains—and here and there an isolated farm. We enjoyed the “sleep that is among the lonely hills” and thought of you as probably enjoying another sleep among hills still lonelier. Mother sang out a verse of the *Atalanta* Chorus ending “Blossom by blossom the spring begins.”

Yours affec.,

J.B.

*To his daughter Jane*

*Llanthony*

*April 18, 1926*

MY BELOVED JANE,

Well, we are thinking of you at Spalato to-day. I hope you have as fine a day as we have here. I expect the place will interest you more than most. Of course, we wonder all day how you are all getting on, and how all the people on the ship settle down together.

. . . I do hope you'll have a fine day at Athens. If so the view from the Propylaea over the sea towards Egina

<sup>1</sup> A family joke about my having been “born in a barouche!”

is a thing to see and remember. And so is the sunset light on the west front of the Parthenon.

We are doing very well here. The hotel is simply an Inn built out of the west tower of the church and the remains of the Prior's lodging. It seems that Landor lived here—in our room probably—most of the time he lived here at all. Southey and Mrs. Southey stayed here with him. He seems to have inhabited the house he built a few meadows above the Abbey very little. It is now much more ruined than the Abbey. The food is very plain but very good. I never tasted better beef or mutton. The worst is the dark, due to the thickness of the walls and the smallness of the windows. Yesterday Ruth and I had a grand walk, one of the very finest and quite the loneliest I have ever had. Mother started with us and walked a mile and a half and then returned and spent her day writing to you and sympathising with us—very like her you'll agree. But we wanted no sympathy. It's true we had some violent squalls of wind, rain and hail. But we had also a lot of sun, and we agreed that the mixture was the best possible weather for seeing mountains. Our walk was thirteen or more miles from here to Hay over the Black Mountains by a sort of cart track, and we never saw a soul on the road all the way (except one man) till we got close to Hay when who do you think we asked our way of, with all the confidence with which one asks anything of the C.O.S., even of its less orthodox members? Sir Charles Lucas!—who I hear spends his holidays with a widowed sister at Hay! He was taking his walks abroad with the parson of Hay. But they cheerfully told us it was about a mile to the station and we found it nearer two, and Ruth would certainly have missed the train if she had not been so fortunate as to have a father! At least she ought to have missed it as we had only two minutes to spare. But as a matter of fact a farmer who heard me make the above remark, and agreed with me as to the casual flightiness of youth, said the train would probably be twenty minutes late—and so it was.

Mother and R. are out walking in the sun and so are you,  
I hope, and so will I be in five minutes!

Your loving Father,  
JOHN C. B.

*To his Wife*

*Overstrand,  
Norfolk  
July 26, 1926*

I spent yesterday morning on the beach after writing to you. I lay full on my back and made myself a pillow of stones like Jacob and watched the clouds moving by, and then opened my Bridges oddly enough on the lines:

“And watch the sunshot palaces high  
That the white clouds build in the breezy sky,”

exactly what I had been doing. I felt very happy and was glad that poetry gives me greater pleasure to-day than ever, I think. One wants to realize that, in all fears and anxieties, the best things are things that cannot be taken away from one; the best of all as old Epictetus preached—least of all the will to accept God’s will and do one’s duty. I wish I lived on that level. I am glad you read the *Knighte’s Tale* and wish we now read oftener together . . . Norah [Lyttelton] delighted by your anxiety lest the cliff should carry me away, and indifference as to the fate of Grangegorman and your nieces.

Jenny would have groaned here at the limitation of baths!

*To Lord Gorell*

*4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.  
October 6, 1926*

MY DEAR GORELL,

(I boldly drop your prefix and hope you will drop my less important one!) Thank you very much for sending me your new volume.<sup>1</sup> I have already read many charming

<sup>1</sup> *Many Mansions.*

poems. I always appreciate your great gift for saying in verse the things that make for peace and goodness, beauty and truth.

I see you say, what indeed we all say and feel, that you prefer the young Wordsworth to the old: but I hope you agree that the old is not to be despised. I remember Hadow saying to me: "I will not give up a single poem of W.W.: I want them all."

With many thanks too for your very kind words, and all good wishes.

Yours sincerely,  
JOHN BAILEY.

### *From the Diary*

February 24. Lunched at Athenæum with old Spielmann<sup>1</sup> who told me he knew Alfred Gilbert very well and thought him (as I have always done) quite alone among English sculptors of our time. Spielmann once said to Rodin that we in England thought Gilbert our Benvenuto Cellini to which Rodin replied, "*Mais bien au delà, bien au delà!*" That may have been a Frenchman's compliment, but even so, coming from a Frenchman it means something.

March 29. We are just back from a delightful and crowded visit to Eton. We went on Thursday, and that afternoon I addressed the ladies of Eton in the drawing-room on Jane Austen; next day the first hundred and fifty boys on "Some Notes on English and other Political ideas", and on Saturday I spoke to the sixth form on Keats. On Saturday came the Attorney-General, Douglas Hogg,<sup>2</sup> and I had a long talk with him about politics. What comes back to me as possibly worth remembering is his remarkable tribute to Balfour. He said that lately he had been chairman of a Committee of the Cabinet, and they sat for some hours one day and could not see their

<sup>1</sup> M. H. Spielmann, F.S.A.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards Viscount Hailsham.



way to a solution of the problem they were discussing. Next day when they met A.J.B. joined them, and at once in his tentative way said, "Couldn't we do it this way?" and they all saw he had solved their problem. Hogg said he was a wonderful witness in the libel action brought by Winston Churchill about the Jutland battle. Hogg put him in the box before Winston to create a good impression with the jury, and when he left it the affair was finished. He had been so bland and innocent, and at the same time so quietly crushing, that the counsel for the defendants got a knock over every question he asked.

April 12. Lord Chelmsford told me a curious thing. He once asked Balfour which of the many high offices he had held interested him most, and he replied, "None of them!" We spoke of his extraordinary detachment. Yet Chelmsford thinks he likes being "in" things, and that is why he has resumed office. He told me, what I had already heard from Bob Cecil and Fisher, of the extraordinary prestige and ascendancy he had in the League of Nations, especially in the matter of Austria; he was listened to with rapt silence and respect. Chelmsford was there as representing India.

June 2. We dined with Lady Burghclere, meeting Lord Buxton, the Steel-Maitlands, Geoffrey Drages, Lady Sandhurst, and Sir Chartres Biron. Steel-Maitland told me that on the night the General Strike was declared he and Baldwin, who was to have been at the Royal Academy dinner, where I was, were dining at the Travellers, and refreshed themselves with champagne after the day of many conferences with miners and T.U.C. They there discussed what Baldwin was to say on the broadcasting, on which the P.M. said, "I wonder what Jix [Joynson-Hicks] will say at the Academy? It wouldn't do for me to be saying, 'Steady, the Buffs,' while he was saying, 'Up Guards and at them.'"

June 29. Dined at the Club. The talk was general and very lively. We talked of Cabinets, and Hugh Cecil said

his father always took a vote because he found the stupid and silent members of the Cabinet generally agreed with him! Hogg regretted much that he had not been in H. of Commons with Balfour, whom Winston Churchill had described to him as easily the finest debater he had known. He said that Balfour still uses the signature A.J.B. in circulating minutes to the Cabinet and he believes he only accepted a peerage because he didn't like being Sir Arthur, and had no idea when he accepted the Garter that he would have to be a Knight! That's very characteristic of his nonchalant ignorance of such matters. I told Hogg that I had heard him make his fiscal speech saying, "I have no settled convictions," and I doubted if history would easily believe that he sat down after such a speech amid cheers which lasted four or five minutes.

George Trevelyan talked of the little interest taken in Parliament now (compared with Test matches and the like) and said Parliament was an aristocratic institution, and it was doubtful whether democracy could keep it up! —a curious remark from a strong Liberal.

We talked of the follies of the Biblical, classical, and Shakespearian critics who fancy they can parcel up books and deprive authors of what they wrote because it is supposed to allude to something they could not know. Hugh Cecil brilliantly quoted Tennyson's "nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue", which he said, especially taken with "the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world", would be taken by critics of this sort a thousand years hence to prove conclusively that this part of Locksley Hall was inserted by a later hand about 1919!

George T. loaded me with congratulations on my *Whitman*. I don't think it is at all my best book, but none has brought me so many congratulations.

November 29. We came back from Oxford where we had a most delightful Sunday with the Riddells,<sup>1</sup> the ex-

<sup>1</sup> The late Sir Walter Buchanan-Riddell, at that time Principal of Hertford College. He had married my niece, Rachel Lyttelton.

cuse being that Ruth had to take her B.A. and I had to deliver the Tylorian Lecture on Carducci.

December 8. Lady Gwendolen Cecil and others lunched here and I asked her about Disraeli. She said that when he came to Hatfield he would make her and Lady Selborne (young girls then, of course) walk with him and would talk quite freely. Once he said to them, "I never had a strong colleague till I got your father." They suggested Derby. "Oh no, he was not strong except in words!" or something to that effect. (The first statement I give *verbatim*.) Well might he remember the weakness which refused office in 1855!

December 14. Dined at The Club. I had extremely pleasant talk both with Lang and Gore<sup>1</sup> and afterwards with Hogarth. Gore talked much of Jowett; agreed with me that the saint living in the presence of God, and the practical or even worldly man looking for visible success, were both absolutely real in him, and said that he despised philosophy and theology, (liking Plato really because Plato leaves all questions open and, I added, because he was almost a Hebrew in moral seriousness) and was totally ignorant of science. "I am the Master of Balliol College. What I don't know is not knowledge," was, he said, no caricature, it was Jowett.

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Gore.

*From the Diary*

January 3. I have celebrated the New Year by my usual visit to the Nursing Home. I went in on Saturday, was operated on at 6.0 and came round at 8.30, and had a very peaceful and pleasant night, repeating to myself as I woke up and fell asleep continually some odes of Horace, some Milton, "Blest Pair" and "Hail Holy Light", and some Tennyson Lyrics from *Princess*, and lines of Virgil, often falling asleep before I got through, and waking up to go on to get it perfect. I got home on Sunday afternoon.

February 29. Dined Lady Rayleigh, meeting Lord Balfour, Sidney Peel, Lady Beatrice Ormsby-Gore and the Bromley-Martins. A.J.B. in great form. He spoke of the tremendous effect on his hearers of Mr. G., the wonderful voice, the piercing eyes, the fascination of his whole presence (I cannot remember his exact words), all irresistible and making you think the speech had an immense lot more in it than you found if you read it.

March 7. I was at Oxford yesterday reading a paper of reminiscences to the Essay Society. I stayed with Fisher and had some good talk with him. We talked a good deal of Lloyd George, whom he still talks of as the greatest English statesman since Chatham . . . but he disagrees altogether with L.G.'s attitude during the [General] Strike. But he told me a pretty story of him in 1920, having two days in the country in the midst of horribly hard work, and insisting on giving up a good deal of one of them by motoring to London to attend an annual service in an obscure Baptist chapel which he had gone to when he first came up to London, and where he had never

once missed this service except when he was at the Peace Conference in Paris.

March 22. Dined at The Club. Oman told me that he had heard Baldwin remark that it was curious that the New Testament only mentions the patron Saint of Scotland once, and that was in connection with loaves and fishes! This I joyously passed across the table to Buchan and Macmillan<sup>1</sup> and Haldane. In the course of the talk which followed, Macmillan volunteered the interesting confession that no Scotsman could possibly have written *Alice in Wonderland*, and Buchan claimed for Scotland the best short story in the world—Wandering Willie's Tale in *Redgauntlet*.

April 4. Dined Literary Society. I had McCarthy [Desmond] and MacLagan. I liked McCarthy very much. Our talk was chiefly of Milton and Cowper, about whom McCarthy is very enthusiastic—to my surprise. He had my edition. He believes the young people will soon re-discover Cowper and get excited over him; spoke enthusiastically even of the *Moral Satires*, and said he had given Cowper lately to Virginia Woolf, of all people, and she had caught his enthusiasm, which he thought a confirmation of his prophecy about the young.

I had an extraordinarily good talk with MacLagan, who is most agreeable. We touched on Pindar, for whom he shares my enthusiasm, Horace, Cicero, Casanova . . . He also told endless good ecclesiastical stories, chiefly of Duchesne. The best, I think, was that of his being anxious to get away from Rome during the reign of Pius IX, who could not bear him. He went to Egypt, where a friend met him with surprise. "What are you doing in Egypt, Duchesne?" "*J'attends la mort d'Hérode.*" A crueller—too cruel—one was his saying that if by the grace of God he ever got to Heaven he hoped he might recognize the Father, who must have such a commanding position in Heaven that He could not be mistaken, and the Son, on whom he had so constantly meditated, but the third

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Lord Macmillan.

Person of the Trinity he was not so sure about, "you see, I have lived so long in Rome, *et il y à si longtemps qu'il ne l'a pas visité.*" The mixture of reverence and profanity is, however, almost incredible. He also talked of Renan and Bourget, and many English ecclesiastics. He mentioned that Inge at luncheon here on Friday had said of the Prayer Book revision and its consequences: "I can't see what grounds they have for thinking they will suppress burglary by allowing petty larceny!" Afterwards I had a talk with Hadow about Trollope and J. Austen, and his unfortunate experience with his Socialist Borough Council at Sheffield, who want to know why the University costs so much more than the technical school where girls are taught typing!

June 16. I have been sitting all day at an Anglo-American Conference to see if anything can be done in union to preserve (without attempting to stereotype, which would be death) the English language. The English representatives who came were Balfour, in chair; Bernard Shaw; Newbolt; [F.S.] Boas; Gollancz<sup>1</sup>; Dover Wilson; Kenyon; Squire<sup>2</sup>; and self. The Americans I did not know. The man next me amused me by turning to me and saying, "Can you tell me whether Mr. John Bailey is present at this Conference?" We dined together at Athenæum, A.J.B. presiding, and making a most charming—and at the same time very earnest—speech about Anglo-American relations and one common language. He said that long before he had any idea he would have anything to do with international relations he had felt that the most important of all problems (or some such phrase) was the drawing together of U.S.A. and the United Kingdom. And he asked what would be said of our generation and that to come, if they allowed their great link, the one language, to become two languages, separate, and not mutually understandable. A.J.B. was in capital spirits and the soul of the meeting. Incidentally he told his neighbour,

<sup>1</sup> The late Sir I. Gollancz.

<sup>2</sup> Now Sir John Squire.

Professor Lowes, and me that he always sent himself to sleep with a detective story, and when Lowes asked me something about some such story he broke in with, "Oh, you mustn't ask *him*, he's a highbrow and knows nothing about detective stories." He also came to the Literary on June 13, and was there also in great form. He was much entertained when I told him the story which George Murray had told me of his having taken Asquith up to Hawarden in 1893, and being anxious to discuss a point in the Home Rule Bill with the old man. Probably deliberately, the old man never let him have a chance. First he was resting before dinner, then there was dinner and the ladies; after dinner when A. hoped the moment had come, G.O.M. proceeded to discourse with Parliamentary gravity on the problem of how Inland Revenue officials were, for purposes of income tax, to get at the earnings of ladies of easy virtue! And this lasted till Mrs. G. came in and carried him off to bed. A.J., on the other hand, as I have heard him say before, found Dizzy's oracular silences, only broken by oracular utterances, rather trying.

June 21. I must record three very Lyttelton sayings. (1) Maud [Mrs. Hugh Wyndham, my niece] when asked if she were going to see the eclipse said no; she had seen a comet in South Africa! (2) At Oxford on Sunday S. remarked that she was told you might probably not see the eclipse as the moon might get in the way! (3) Jenny has only just discovered that the common phrase "also ran" is borrowed from racing, and not, as she supposed, from the Gospels—the other disciple also ran to the sepulchre!

*To his daughter Ruth*

*Wramplingham  
January 14, 1927*

... He<sup>1</sup> talked also of many things including my "Question of Taste" which he had been reading, and

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Walter de la Mare.

warmly agreed with, tho' he said the evidence for continuance and assuredness of literary reputations had never struck him before: also of the Prayer Book, in which matter he shares Jenny's views and mine of the impertinence of parsons who substitute their fancy prayers for the noble things provided in the Book: and of science and the ultimate things, as to which he told me he had asked Bragg (the great physicist isn't he?) whether he wished to solve the ultimate questions, to which Bragg said, "Certainly not," and you may be sure de la M. entirely agreed with this preference for *omnia exeunt in mysterium*! He spoke of the great contrast this presented to the science of fifty years ago which pretended to answer all the riddles of thought and being.

. . . Well, you seem to be having a very good time. I hope you are learning to cook. Your review of Lucas, etc., is in *Lit. Sup.* (but I had no time to read it), but not your last, nor mine.

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

May 23, 1927

MY DEAR FRANK,

I have been reading that letter again—I hadn't it by me yesterday—with more gratitude and pleasure, but I won't say more of that, only if we ever had time for half the things we want to do when we meet, it would be fun some day to read over a lot of the old letters, yours to me and mine to you, and live so many old days and interests over again.

You ask for answers to so many questions that I should never end if I began taking them as my text. We must talk and show you our photographs—particularly of Therme and Barracco—what a happy man Barracco must have been! I can't imagine a more delightful life than to go on and on collecting bits of Greek work and forming your own fine gallery good enough to be a pride and glory even to Rome. I suppose he had endless money and leisure,



but I know nothing about him. I must ask Rodd,<sup>1</sup> whom, by the way, I found in the Keats-Shelley house when Ruth and I went in there. It has a good library and a wonderful collection of engravings, etc., of everything connected with Keats, Shelley, and even Byron, but the best thing in it is one of the two drawings Severn made of Keats directly after he died. It is in the room in which he died. We loved Assisi, I *must* tell you that. I had been there before, but only for a few hours, and had forgotten almost everything (you would have remembered every inch of every street!). What a world it is (that old choice you talked of in your letter) when one goes in a few hours from Rome to Assisi, from the city of the ancients and Michael Angelo to the city of St. Francis, who had everything the ancients had not (and M.A. had little), and nothing that either M.A. or ancients had! That's the difficulty I am always feeling, I want Christianity but I want it not to be as it has so very often been—a suicide of civilization. Is that trying to serve God and Mammon? I don't think so. Certainly old Hügel,<sup>2</sup> whose very interesting last Lectures we were all reading before we went, didn't think so: he was sure that Christianity must not starve mind or senses and is always insisting on that, tho' he also insists that Christianity is not itself unless it is a "*heroism*". And I have no doubt his life, married and well-to-do and peaceful and scholarly as it was—was secretly that in ways one does not know . . . Did you read the very interesting review of his letters in *Lit. Sup.* a week or two ago? No, I will send it. He was, I think the profoundest religious thinker of our time; how he remained a Roman sometimes passes my comprehension. Intellectually he was very free: devotionally he had all the best side of R.Csm and none of the other side.

Well, but Assisi. I thought less of the Giotto's of Francis's life than one used to, in obedience to Ruskin. I am sure Cimabue was a much greater man, his Virgin

<sup>1</sup> Sir Rennell Rodd, now Lord Rennell.

<sup>2</sup> Baron von Hügel.

and saints and his ruined Crucifixion have a grandeur of design of which Giotto has nothing. But the loveliest, tenderest, most human thing there is not by either of them but by Lorenzetti whom I must look out in the books. Have we anything of his in N. Gallery? I will show you a photo of it, but it is a poor one, the thing itself is a miracle of expression and beauty, Virgin and Child between St. John and St. Francis—Virgin guiding the Child to bless St. Francis. We will look at what we can in N. Gallery when you come. We marvel at your series of Galleries in those few days—I suppose you had not me to waste your time.

Your affec.

JOHN C. B.

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.

May 23, 1927

DEAR F.,

I heard a good story last night at The Club. Sir R. Horne to Joynson Hicks a few days ago, "Well, Jix, what's on to-day? Have you got another raid for us?"

J.H. (rather huffy): "What do you mean? The thing was serious enough, not the sort of thing than can be repeated."

R.H.: "Oh, I see, *neque semper Arcos tendit Apollo*." Jix, who knows no Latin, not pleased.

To Algernon Cecil

Creech Grange,<sup>1</sup>

Wareham, Dorset

June 5, 1927

MY DEAR ALGERNON,

I finished your book<sup>2</sup> in the train and after tea here on Friday, and must write you a line of congratulation (*not* because I suppose you are particularly desirous of my praise

<sup>1</sup> Where we were staying with Mr. and Mrs. John Bond.

<sup>2</sup> *British Foreign Secretaries*.

or any other!). But I do think it is an admirable work, one of the most interesting studies of foreign politics (which are the most interesting kind of politics—though the Socialists don't know it!) I ever read. And it is full of good things.

How interesting your account of Salisbury! That interesting and curious question of Christian dogma as less difficult than Christian morals is one of which I am sure we shall hear more. I urged Cyril Alington to try and discuss it in a little book he lately published on Elementary Christianity, but he wouldn't do it. I am sure it has to be faced. For Christian ethic as apparently expressed in some of Our Lord's words (in marked contrast to much of what we know of His life, and to such uninventable texts as "the Son of Man came eating and drinking") does seem to destroy all civilization and all social and even family life ("he that hateth not his father and mother," etc.). And yet we can't suppose that God did not, and does not, will all the developments of civilization, art and literature, science and discovery, economics and wealth. So that we must ignore some of those words, we *must* serve, or almost serve, Mammon as well as God, we *must* find a *via media* of some sort between the way of the world and "He that loveth his life shall lose it." What a big problem—the urgent one, I am sure. I am sure many honest men reject Christianity because they think its "ethic" impracticable except for monks.

But I meant to have kept to your book.

I don't believe Dizzy ever was as unimportant at Berlin as you and Lady Gwendy Cecil and the Camb. Hist. suppose. Does anyone think that Salisbury, then little known, could have got the Treaty without him? I am sure he couldn't. Whether it was worth getting is, of course, another question, and I am, as you know, no lover of the Turks, and think L. G. fell for the one good thing in his foreign policy. But I don't for a moment believe Dizzy wouldn't have fought! To think so shows a complete misunderstanding of his character—just the sort of mistake

the dons of the Camb. Hist. would make. The foreigners didn't make it, neither Berlin nor Petersburg. . . . As to Grey, there is too much to discuss for a letter. Your analysis of his character is, I think, at once brilliant, true and wonderfully, surprisingly, sympathetic. But I think your internationalism makes you several times load the dice against your country or its allies, as I should probably not escape loading them the other way.

. . . We are very happy here, a very pleasant party, and this lovely place and country and *the sea* which we saw yesterday afternoon dancing in the sun.

I *immensely* enjoyed our day on Tuesday.

From Sir George Trevelyan <sup>1</sup>

June 7, 1927

DEAR JOHN BAILEY,

You certainly have faithfully earned, and finely illustrated the confidence which Lady Frederick displayed towards you.<sup>2</sup>

. . . I began by reading your Introduction, and then the whole of the Second Volume, doing nothing else for three days, and thinking of little, or nothing, else ever since. All that part I rather devoured than read, and the First Volume I have studied more leisurely, and less passionately, since. I will say at once, most unreservedly, that I cannot imagine how the whole thing, in all points, could be improved upon. I more and more perceived and understood, as I read, the unerring skill with which the Appendices were devised, arranged, and utilised; and your "setting" of the diary, in the explanatory matter from your own pen, could not possibly be better done. Every one you write about is as much alive as he *was* in life, and as he *is* in the pages of Lady Frederick's Diary. I would instance especially your picture, in so few touches, of Hartington in your Introduction. But it is so everywhere, and all along.

<sup>1</sup> The late Sir George Trevelyan, O.M.

<sup>2</sup> Referring to the Diary of Lady Frederick Cavendish, my half-sister; edited and published by my husband in 1927.

The governing and pervading impression is that of Lady Frederick's infinite *goodness* and nobility of nature. . . . If she had been a man and had been brought up at Eton and Trinity she would have taken as good a degree as her father. The picture of current politics between 1866 and 1882 is lively, informing, and essentially accurate, at every stage of the business. Indeed the personal treatment of Gladstone is singularly vivid and perceptive in his niece's journals. I do not know anything which ever affected me more than her account of her husband's appointment to Ireland, and of what came of it. The unsparing truthfulness and sincerity of it cannot be surpassed, and greatly increases the effect of it upon those who know the history from within. But, if I once began on this topic, and on those two dear people, I should never have done.

*To Sybil Cust*<sup>1</sup>

*Chilton Foliat Rectory,  
Hungerford  
August 25, 1927*

MY DEAR SYBIL,

I have just been thinking of you as I looked at a poem of Wordsworth's. You were surprised at his phrase, "the soothing thoughts that spring Out of human suffering." Look at the poem *Nature and the Poet* ("I was thy neighbour once" it begins) written after the death of his brother, the greatest sorrow of his life till Dora died in his old age; he says, "a deep distress hath humanized my soul," and he welcomes "frequent sights of what is to be borne," and he always insists that pain and sorrow are transformed by sympathy into a kind of deeper joy; and that human nature is much poorer without them.

Perhaps the word "soothing" is not the very best word in that place, but that is what he means, I think, and surely it is true doctrine—very Christian doctrine.

Yours affec.,

JOHN C. B.

<sup>1</sup> My sister Sybil, wife of Sir Lionel Cust, K.C.V.O.

To Walter Crum

Wramplingham Hall,  
Wymondham, Norfolk  
September 6, 1927

... You ought to be an epicurean occasionally and remember the wisdom of my dear la Fontaine "*les longs ouvrages me font peur*," and "*c'est assez: jouissons*." You are too like Browning's Grammarian, you ought not to let your Dictionary overwhelm you. Old Johnson didn't let his forbid an occasional merry evening at "the tavern".

However, I have given you a great deal of good advice in the last forty years without much effect, except I dare-say an undeniable increase of my own self-righteousness, so I had better leave you to go your own way, and recognize that you at least exhibit one Christian virtue to a remarkable degree in the patience with which you have so long endured my sermons!

... I am going up to Manchester and Liverpool to lecture in October, when I hope to see Liverpool Cathedral, which everybody tells me is the greatest architectural achievement of the last hundred years or more. Have you seen it, I wonder? These lecture invitations worry me a good deal. I get one at least once a week and I never can make up my mind how many it is my duty to accept. I am going to give the Fry Lectures at Bristol.

... My Cavendish *Diary* did extraordinarily well to my great surprise; I mean for a thirty-one-and-sixpenny book. The public appetite for reminiscences is insatiable: and she *was* a very fine woman. Cyril Alington says I bought my car out of blackmail levied on the aristocracy for not inserting stories to their discredit!

Yours affec.,

JOHN C. B.

*To Walter Crum*

*Datchet House,  
Datchet*

*December 27, 1927*

MY DEAR WALTER,

Many thanks for the photograph and your letter. We agree that if the photo. is not itself "young and beautiful" it has in it the record and remnant of a young and beautiful past! Anyhow, it's a face that has shared and reciprocated friendly glances with me for a good many years now and will, I expect, to the end. So I like having it: though I confess I haven't it at this moment, having left it behind at Eton, where we spent Christmas.

Well, it's too late for Happy Christmas, but it's not too late for Happy New Year. And you know I wish you that, you and all that you love and that loves you. Health and fame and the Dictionary; these are my wishes for you, and a speedy visit to London and a merry meeting with

Yours affec.,

JOHN C. B.

I have just been given a volume of *le Fanu Ghost Stories* edited by the Provost of Eton (M. R. James). But it's not easy to make my flesh creep.

Alas, I am sixty-four on January 10!

To his daughter Ruth <sup>1</sup>

. . . Is it true that all good poetry is obscure? Homer isn't, nor the *Prometheus Vincitus*, nor Racine, nor La Fontaine, nor the *finest* pages of Dante, Shakespeare, and Milton, which are generally the most direct and plain. Is all new poetry obscure? Byron and Hugo, as I said in my article, were new enough to enrage the old generation—but nobody found them obscure.

I think your criticism, like most of the new criticism, is strongest in abstract thought, weakest in illustrative proof, and I believe the criticism of an art must be continually remembering the history of the art and the practice of the greatest masters.

To Percy Matheson

4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.  
February 28, 1928

MY DEAR PERCY,

Many thanks for your letter and the Bramcote Verses. I envy you your gift of "versing", as always. How many metres you handle with ease and success! Some cynic said "*ce que ne vaut pas la peine d'être dit on le chante*", or some such phrase. But there is another side of that picture. What one can't say out in plain words, inward hopes and fears and loves, one *can* say, if one has your gift, in verse. And so I suppose year after year you said for your family in your little poems just what they, or some of them, felt, but what not even you yourself could have said in any other way . . .

<sup>1</sup> Referring to a review of modern poetry written by Ruth.



To his Wife

Elwood House,  
Belfast <sup>1</sup>

March 9, 1928

... Well, you will have had a letter from Jenny telling you of our very successful voyage here, as calm as a duck-pond it was. Our host and hostess are very friendly, and I hope Jenny is happy. But it is all rather masculine, and last night we all had too much of a Mr —, who dined here to take the Chair at the Lecture and came back afterwards and stayed till eleven, talking incessantly and not so amusingly as he supposed. (How true that probably is of all of us, alas!) But he was of the cynically jocose sort which is not exactly the *ethos* either of Mr. Livingstone or of the Bailey family. I believe it was a mask and that he was more serious underneath, for when I walked back from the Lecture alone with him he talked about the difficulty of loving God and one's neighbour!

I was very nervous—quite genuinely—about the Lecture and thought it would probably be a fiasco. But I don't think it was. The hall was very crowded, a few standing—about 400 in all. No doubt people were brought by a long article in the chief paper here on me and my literary virtues and on the National Trust. The thing that went best was the reading aloud, especially that of the *West Wind*, which was a great success.

We had a luncheon party here yesterday, with two members of the Ministry of Finance and their wives, and to-day we lunch with a newspaper proprietor to meet the Minister of Finance himself. It seems more suitable to the Governor of the Bank of England than to J.B.! But the Ministry of Finance here has the care of old buildings.

<sup>1</sup> Where he and his daughter Jane were staying with Mr. Livingstone (now Sir Richard Livingstone, President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford), at that time Vice-Principal of Belfast University. John had gone in order to lecture to the University on Shelley.

*To his Wife*

*Glenarm Castle,<sup>1</sup>*

*Co. Antrim,*

*Northern Ireland*

*March 10, 1928*

. . . We had a most lovely run here yesterday in the splendid Daimler car of the admirable man who had just entertained us at a large luncheon, where Jenny sat next him and was more than once asked about "her husband's" lecture or his Chairmanship of the Trust! How young I must appear to be! At least I hope that's the explanation. When we got into the car to come here we said to each other that we had exhausted all our stock of civil speeches and had none at all left for Peg and Ducie! There were three of the Cabinet at the luncheon and the Minister of Finance sat next me. . . . The Finance Minister asked me if we had had the State luxury-cabins on the ship when we crossed. I said certainly not, why should we? To which he replied that they were intended for distinguished guests and we must certainly have them on our return on Monday, and he should order them to be given to us! We shall see whether he does. Everybody was so civil we felt like royalties, and gladly fell back to our own company for the long drive here. It goes by the sea all the way, and but for the many bungalows, etc., is a most lovely run of forty miles. The country here is very fine and I wonder almost they don't spend more time here. I like the house, bogus Gothic of a hundred years ago. *But* it is horribly cold, as they are well aware, and we did not dress for dinner, and I could not get to sleep till nearly one for the cold. I then slept in my dressing-gown warmly and well. Jenny says she was cold but was not kept awake by it. Unluckily the weather has turned very cold. I had a good fire in my room, and they do all they can, but a big empty unused house is like the North Pole, and they have no heating but fires, and the big fire in the hall where

<sup>1</sup> The home of Lord and Lady Antrim. He had married my niece, Margaret Talbot, daughter of John Talbot, M.P.

we dined is one of those that send ninety-five per cent of their heat up the chimney. However, that's our only drawback, for D. and Peg gave us the warmest of welcomes and we are very happy.

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.  
March 21, 1928

. . . I wish you had had a holiday. What are you going to do after Easter? We are going on April 12 to Caen for two nights; Versailles (a week); Bourges, Le Mans, Chartres, Rouen, etc. I suppose you won't join us? It would be very nice to have your company, and the advantage of your architectural learning. Gwen Stephenson<sup>1</sup> and her boy will be with us at Versailles; from whence we shall, of course, visit the Louvre if nothing else of Paris. We shall get home about end of April or first days of May.

. . . Benn's sixpenny books are very good. What an age it is for this sort of pocket wisdom, really very well done. The *magna opera* which you desiderate no one seems any longer to read unless they are three-volume biographies or the like. I wish I felt any confidence (this is really gospel honesty) that my sixpenny or two and sixpenny Shakespeare would really be worth twopence! I have begun it, but feel little confidence or satisfaction. Still I have been in that state over books before, and afterwards have been only too easily self-complacent over the printed page! But this is a very tough job, the toughest I ever tried. What *can* one say?

To Walter Crum

4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.  
March 25, 1928

MY DEAR WALTER,

It's always a joy to see your hand—not always a joy to decipher it! You say you are ageing—I never see many

<sup>1</sup> See p. 286

signs of it, and as you talk of walking over the Alps as if you were Hannibal or the young Napoleon, I can't think you can suffer much from *anno domini*! I am glad the Dictionary is now *in esse* as well as *in posse*; that must be a joy to you. I was amused the other day, reading Fortescue's *Letters of George III* (one of the only two books I have reviewed this year) to see that he gave £200 to assist the production of a Coptic Dictionary! Have you approached his present Majesty?

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Caen

Sunday, April 15, 1928

MY DEAR FRANK,

Well, here we are, having got so far very successfully and wishing rather we were not pledged to go to Versailles to-morrow. For there is so much to see in this country and we shall see nothing but just the two towns Rouen and Caen. At my age I am now shy of talking of "coming again". I said a definite good-bye to Rome last year, but if it could be so it would be pleasant to come here again to this *very* comfortable hotel with you, and see all the places round. . . . You were right in saying those two churches are stupendous. I am not sure I was not more impressed by the *Dames*, tho', of course, it is rather spoilt by being split in two to make the choir and transepts into a chapel for the *Hôtel Dieu*. . . I suppose a Roman would have thought that crypt just a curious cluster of debased columns, yet how fine it is with, somehow I think, a new *sentiment* in it which is not in classical work. Barbarism? Romance? Christianity? (First or third, not the second, I think. That begins to come in with the pointed arch, pure Gothic, "*style ogival*" as the French guide book seems to call it.) The *Dames* is, of course, less altered than the other greater church, into which a good deal of thirteenth-century work has been inserted. In both cases, do you remember? the abbeys (as distinct from the churches) were rebuilt, *temp.* Louis XIV, in what

is to me a very pleasing style of stateliness. The *Hommes* is now a *Lycée*: the *Dames* a hospital for old people. Did I ever persuade you to read a book I am here reading again, really one of the most interesting I know—the correspondence of George Sand and Flaubert? The clash of temperament between her (after her very *orageuse vie*), all goodness of heart, faith in goodness, optimism, kindness, hope and charity, and him, pure intellect with an immeasurable contempt and distrust of men (“*Nous ne souffrons que d’une maladie, mais elle est formidable et universelle—la bêtise!*”) a very honest man with a low view of morals (tho’ not a low practice—he lived mostly like a monk). There are curious arguments between them: one, on whether a young man engaged is right or wrong to vow himself to chastity till he can afford to marry—which G.S. defends and Flaubert thinks absurd. But most of their topics are, of course, art and letters, and the notable people of that time, and their love for each other, and his mother, and her children and grandchildren. It’s all extraordinary good reading, and I am always recommending it, but don’t often get people to follow my recommendation.

Your learned letter dazzled us all. We were interested as well as impressed.

To Paul Stephenson

Hôtel Métropole,

Tours

April 25, 1928

MY DEAR PAUL,<sup>1</sup>

I want to catch you before you go back to Harrow to send you this little souvenir of our week together with all my good wishes for your career as Harrovian, Oxonian, artist, and then Member of Parliament or whatever it may

<sup>1</sup> Paul Stephenson, third son of Sir Guy Stephenson, at that time assistant Public Prosecutor, who had married my niece, Gwendolen Talbot, a daughter of John Talbot, M.P. She and Paul had accompanied us and our two daughters on a trip to Versailles, from whence we afterwards proceeded to the Castles on the Loire.

be, in the years that I shall most certainly not be there to see!

It was great fun for us having you and your mother, and added greatly to our gaiety, and I loved seeing anyone so worthy of history, art and all the rest as you. We must and will have an afternoon together at Hampton Court or British Museum. Only I *won't* go to Newgate—" *Méfiez-vous des cachots, c'est trop triste.*" You are young enough at present to throw off these horrors; when you are my age you will prefer your humanity amiable and happy, making art and goodness, not cruelty and ugliness. However, you don't, of course, want to be my age or to think of anything so distant and absurd—so *n'en parlons plus*. We have got on pretty well since we parted in spite of losing you. Bourges was very well worth seeing and a charming old town. The worst was having to wait three hours at Vierzon, *une ville de commerce*, fit only for *des commis voyageurs*. Here we are very pleased with ourselves in a most *excellent hotel* with *suitable wine* and all complete. We are going a motor run to the Châteaux tomorrow, if it is as fine and warm as it at last is to-day. Love to your father and mother and tell them to plan an early evening for bridge with us.

Your affectionate elderly uncle,

JOHN BAILEY.

I have just arisen from our after luncheon "snooze"!

The glass here is, I think, only second to Chartres—finer perhaps even than Bourges.

We get home probably on Wednesday.

To W. W. Vaughan

Brown's<sup>1</sup>  
Robertsbridge, Sussex  
June 24, 1928.

MY DEAR WILL,

I am most grateful for your £5, which I have sent on,

<sup>1</sup> Where we were staying with Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Richmond.

and much touched by your sending it in spite of doubts, more or less to please me.<sup>1</sup> What you say raises that big problem which anyone who ever thinks in terms of ethics must at least sometimes consider and never without discomfort and disturbance. Certainly one does not find a solution to it, and a half sheet of paper would not state the solution if one found it. It is one of the few things that have ever kept me awake (not for long!), but I don't know that my waking actions have been much affected by it. In one sense or point of view the question may be asked: How can I justify spending £50 on going abroad or taking a house, or how can the State justify buying a valuable picture, or maintaining palaces, while slums and disease and poverty exist? The only thing I can say is that I believe inequality—for all its bad points—is a healthier and better and more live condition for a nation than equality: that there is much in Boissier's question which I heard him put at the College de France: "*Qu'est ce que c'est que la civilization, Messieurs? C'est le goût du superflu*": and that nature works in her slow way towards more justice and less gross inequality, and that we can and ought to *help* her (and we and she have done and are doing a good deal in the last century), but we cannot rush her or anticipate her. In fact—on the immediate point—I think Oxford is a too precious—even unique—possession to be allowed to fall into meanness or ugliness while we are dealing with the slums. You say Oxford is "no national playground". I say it is much more than a playground: it is a spiritual inheritance, perhaps the greatest work of art the nation has produced. However, it's too big a question, as I say. But, so far as Oxford is concerned, I have no doubts at all—our generation can do few or no better services to those that come after than the preservation of a place whose beauty and dignity has been the best sort of education to so many of the best Englishmen.

<sup>1</sup> Referring to a donation sent by Mr. Vaughan for the Oxford Preservation Society.

To Walter Crum

4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.

July 23, 1928

MY DEAR WALTER,

Your letter was pleasant company to my bedridden breakfast this morning.<sup>1</sup> I am all right, but the anæsthetic always leaves me feeble in body and mind for some days.

... I don't see any reason why you should contemplate retiring to "the shelf at Golder's Green" for a very long while yet. Remember what Macmahon said to me: "You must bear in mind, Mr. Bailey, that you are fifteen years younger than your father was when he was your age!" And *you* must also remember that your friend who took you for a clergyman (and he was not the first! you have the ascetic, intellectual look of the best sort of clergyman!) was prophesying old age for you. I expect *The Times* of twenty-five years hence will be paying compliments to "the remarkable Coptic scholar whose life has all been given—as lives so rarely are in England—to the cause of learning"! Don't overwork yourself, you'll only do inferior work. Remember Gibbon who only worked five hours, and Darwin who did not, I fancy, average three.

I seldom or never read German poetry now except Goethe. But I bought a book not long ago, *German Lyrics and Ballads*, by Vos and Barber (Harrap) which I have glanced at. It seems to me very well done. Do you know Hölderlin, the scholar-poet? I rather like him. But you are wrong to skip Goethe, he is worth all the rest put together, and his best lyrics—which are absolutely simple—seem to me to stand alone in all the world and with no company but Shakespeare and Sappho.

You've sent me to my German poetry—but the brain refuses work!

Yours affec.,

JOHN C. B.

<sup>1</sup> Referring to one of his periodical twenty-four hours' visits to a nursing home for treatment.



To his Wife

Dunvegan Castle,<sup>1</sup>  
Isle of Skye, N.B.

... I am amazed at you and Medge going to the Horse Show. It's like Medge—and *not* like J.C.B. who could certainly not give his two hours of Dublin to that, but to the Custom House and the Bank and St. Patrick's, and certainly to the Gallery if there was time. Do you remember I went there every day when we were at the Hospital and told my car driver, who did not know where it was, that he did not know what was famous all over Europe, after which he became very proud of it!

I don't think I have said much about this place. It's really a wonderful house, partly very old, occupying nearly the whole of a great rock running into a shallow arm of the loch, itself an arm of the Atlantic. They still have all the things Boswell describes, Rory More's sword and the rest, and they still have a piper who pipes *reveillé* at 8 a.m., and dinner at 8 p.m., after which he partly waits (in kilt, etc.) and partly pipes while we dine. Cameron wears the Cameron tartan, and Sir R. the Macleod, at dinner. It's rather sad to think that as the present Chief, who is the twenty-second, and Sir Reginald have no son, and their younger brother the parson lost his in the war, the Chieftainship after all these centuries must be separated from the Castle and the property, and become a mere name.

... The weather continues very wild, with tearing wind. But it did not rain much yesterday and the sun shone a good deal, and the morning lights and shadows on the mountains were a beautiful sight. I took a little walk by myself in the morning to telegraph to you, and then up a hill to look over the loch, and in the afternoon I walked ...

<sup>1</sup> Where he and Ruth were staying with Sir Reginald Macleod and his daughter, Mrs. Hubert Walter. Meriel Talbot and I made an expedition to the West of Ireland at the same time.

Alice (Walter)<sup>1</sup> must always have been an original, for we heard last night of how when an undergraduate she joined a Geological party under a Swiss Professor in the Alps where *for eight nights* they slept *eight or nine in a bed* in the Alpine huts, both sexes in the same bed, including guides! She incidentally remarked that she slept in a mackintosh but was much *kicked by a Dutchman* who slept next her. The beds must have been vast, I suppose!

Old Sir Reginald told me yesterday that when he was at Cambridge he and A.J.B. and Lord Kinnaird went from here in three canoes an expedition all among these islands, which are exposed to the full force of Atlantic gales. I got him to read us after dinner his letters to his mother (who was naturally in terror) at the time. It is amazing, as he now sees, that any of them escaped to tell the tale. Luckily the weather was fine all the time, except one day when they were in some danger. Fancy A.J.B. in a canoe on the Atlantic, living on porridge and oatmeal!

To Dame Meriel Talbot

Ardmarnock House,  
Tighnabruaich,  
Argyllshire  
August 16, 1928

PS.—Oh, I have said nothing about your new greatness<sup>2</sup>—but Sal will have given you my congratulations. I am so glad. You have taken Alfred's [Lyttelton's] place as the "public and political" member of the family. Will you end your career as Baroness Talbot? I suppose you are "seconded" from your office for this work. It ought to be very interesting tho' I expect very difficult. I wonder whether any newspaper will complain of the sister-in-law of the Assistant Public Prosecutor<sup>3</sup> being put upon it!

<sup>1</sup> Now Mrs. Archibald Macnabb.

<sup>2</sup> Her appointment as a member of the Police Commission.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Guy Stephenson.

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.  
October 26, 1928

MY DEAR FRANK,

It is exactly a month to-day since you wrote me one of your most remarkable (as distinct from your *best*) letters. The best letters of you, as of other masters of the art epistolary, are the ones full of personalia—*from you to me, etc.*, but nevertheless I doubt whether they are so *remarkable* as these letters of yours in which you display your amazing memory for every detail of the art and architecture of the towns and villages you have been seeing lately. I do envy that. . . . How I agree with you about the contrast between the superstitious Belgians going to early Mass and our own unhappy creatures reading — — —<sup>1</sup> I often preach about that. Seventy years ago few cottagers could read. But those who could, read the Bible, and *Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Paradise Lost* and *Robinson Crusoe*. And now! Their Sundays fill their minds with whatsoever things are base, whatsoever things are vile, whatsoever things are of evil report.

I shall keep your great discourse on the Ghent triptych, and on the other pictures in my Belgian Guide for reference if ever I get there again. You know Jenny was there the other day, staying first in a Convent (!) at Bruges (very cheap but not, I gather, too comfortable) and afterwards with a friend of K. Falcon's at Brussels. I gave her your letter to improve her mind with.

You must come up and see the Dutchmen in the winter, if you don't come sooner. We have been at several interesting places lately. On Sunday week we were with the Ferrers at Staunton Harold (I for the Leicester Conference: you may have seen my troubles in *The Times*). S.H. is a fine seventeenth-eighteenth-century house in a beautiful Park, near Ashby de la Zouche. The feature is a great private chapel—not *in* the house, but very close by—built by the father of the first Earl. He died in the

<sup>1</sup> A low-class Sunday paper.

Tower, partly for building it, in 1656. The inscription on the porch says: "He did the best things in the worst times and hoped them in the most calamitous." Fine, isn't it? Then last Sunday at York Deanery and at Bishopthorpe for tea, a much finer place than I expected. The Minster is, of course—well, what you know. We saw the glass being cleaned in the Clerk of the Works' office. The Dean is a round man in a round hole—as happy as the day is long. So would you be. I wish you were a Dean. I liked the Deanery very much; a good Horace Walpole Gothic house, made very comfortable by Foxley Norris: heating, electric light, etc. We became "Friends of the Minster".

. . . We go to-morrow to the Palace, Chichester. How ecclesiastical we are! I want particularly to see that Virgin and Child painting which is in the Palace chapel. Do you remember the copy of it in the Medieval Paintings Exhibition?

### *From the Diary*

March 27. Dined at The Club. Lord Stamfordham warmly congratulated me on my article in *Quarterly Review* on Queen Victoria, as did also Fabian Ware.<sup>1</sup>—said the King had rather regretted (as I had) the publication of so many "I will never consent," "I can never allow," etc., about things on which she had to give way. Absurd for her to go on writing in that way. But when he said he was sorry they had been printed, to Ramsay Macdonald at the Amanullah banquet, R.M. said, "Oh no, Sir, I would not lose them for anything; they show how *human* the Queen was." Hugh Cecil said his father never could bear *slow* talkers and always fidgeted his legs and fingers when he had to listen to them. Hartington was very slow, and said once, "when I begin talking to Salisbury he begins fidgeting his legs and hands about, and that bothers me, and then I can't talk at all!" Grey talked of Gladstone's miraculous readiness in debate. In those on Home Rule, for instance, he was always instantly

<sup>1</sup> Sir Fabian Ware, K.C.V.O.

ready with a detailed reply, as if he had had it in his mind for weeks. The whole evening was one of the pleasantest I ever had at The Club.

April 3. Bruce Richmond has just told me a lovely story about Walter de la Mare. He is at last getting well fast after his very long illness, but he was for three weeks at the very gates of death. On one of these days his younger daughter said to him as she left him, "Is there nothing I could get for you, fruit or flowers?" On which in a weak voice he could just—so characteristically, answer: "No, no, my dear; too late for fruit, too soon for flowers!"

July 26. We went to the Buckingham Palace Garden Party and enjoyed it, seeing lots of people. Among others I talked with the Archbishop of York,<sup>1</sup> and was glad to find him strongly opposed to a scheme for a volume of more or less complimentary essays to be edited by J. Buchan and me and presented to the Archbishop of Canterbury on his golden wedding-day. Young Longman had just been to see me about it and I had practically declined on the ground that the scheme was impracticable and I think also undesirable. Had much talk with Buchan of other matters, chiefly of Baldwin, of whom he sees a great deal. . . . He believes (as I do) Baldwin has an enormous hold on the country—personally not politically—is as popular in Scotland, and has a position there such as no one has had since Mr. G. He attributes part of B.'s popularity to the decay of political interests in people—it is felt, Buchan says, that Baldwin is not interested in politics. If that is true, I think it a very unfortunate reason for the popularity of a Prime Minister!

July 31. I have toiled uncomfortably and unhopefully all this summer at this Shakespeare book I foolishly promised Squire to write. I shall hope to get it finished by Christmas. Squire, I suppose, would have written it in a month! I have little to say and the only good of this job is the careful reading of Shakespeare.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Lang.

1929

To W. W. Vaughan

4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.

January 10, 1929

MY DEAR WILL,

I was very glad to get your letter this morning—my 65th (or more strictly 66th) birthday! How many more years can we expect? How many ought we to wish for? Not being fit for much else these last days I have been looking over old diaries and papers to save executors trouble, and I am surprised to find how much oftener I was ill in 1885-1890 than I am now. I seem to have had continual bad headaches. Almost the last diary I kept was that of our time at Bonn together; there were things in it I had quite forgotten: others I remembered as if they were yesterday. Well, we've walked a good many miles together now, and I hope, "be it less or more or soon or slow", the rest of the journey will never send us far apart.

I am interested by your account of S. Wales. Did you hear anything about the boys all refusing to emigrate, as reported by the Canadian Agent on Tuesday? Have we lost the spirit of adventure which did so much to people the world? I say "we", but I doubt if I should ever have had it; still, it is disastrous that they should prefer sticking in their valleys to the risks and chances of Canada. Interesting your meeting Maxton. I am told he is very popular in the House with all parties, because he is so honest, and unlike most fanatics can get a twinkle into his eye.

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.  
February 2, 1929

MY DEAR FRANK,

I was very sorry to see you go away; I wish you lived nearer and could have a frequent day in London. I get few pleasures like a day of art-seeing with you. Let us hope for a good deal of that when old age has really come! and we are both unemployed old gentlemen, with, let us hope, our eyes intact!

Yours aff.,  
JOHN C. B.

To Walter Crum

4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.  
April 6, 1929

... I wanted to congratulate you on the appearance of the First Part of your *magnum opus*,<sup>1</sup> a great achievement. Bruce tells me he has sent it out for review. But who *can* review it? I hope the *Gelehrte* of Germany will blow your trumpet as loud as I am sure it deserves. I am *so* glad that you have lived (as was probable, tho', characteristically, you did not think it) to see at any rate the first fruits of your labours. I hope your *genius irritabilis* has not quarrelled with the Press over the publication.

... I am feeling fairly free, as I at last sent off my confounded Shakespeare book to Squire a week ago. I ought to have stuck to my original refusal to undertake it, as I have really nothing to say on that exhausted subject. I have been very depressed about it and only sent it in because I could not continue struggling with it. Squire writes that it is "first rate"! and the fact that he says it lifts my depression a little. Last night I was a little elated by getting the Milton and Johnson accounts, which show that those two immortal works are still selling at the rate of six copies every day the booksellers are open—which is not bad after fourteen to sixteen years.

<sup>1</sup> The Coptic Dictionary. See p. 12.

To Percy Matheson

*Dale Lodge, Private Hotel,  
Grasmere, English Lakes  
April 25, 1929, till May 2nd  
at any rate*

MY DEAR PERCY,

I think I generally answer your letters fairly quickly, and you will have been surprised to hear nothing this time. But (a) I lost your letter; (b) I was busy; (c) I thought you would like the taste of a letter coming from our beloved Lakes! so I waited. We came up here with Hamer<sup>1</sup> of the Trust last Saturday, and I had three busy days with him inspecting and interviewing and considering reports and suggestions. In fact the only drawback to coming here now is that it is not exactly a holiday, or not entirely; for so many people want to make so many suggestions—or at any rate to be polite to me—that one doesn't feel free as one does abroad. But I am delighted to be here again, and though it is cold we have wonderful weather. Gordon Wordsworth, with whom Sarah and I had tea yesterday (after walking along Loughrigg Terrace) says this is the best moment to be here: the colours of the winter are still on the hills, and though the monotonous green of summer has not begun yet you have some green in the fresh larches and thorns and beeches, and then there is cherry blossom everywhere, and many daffodils and anemones (especially in the wood near Friar's Crag which belongs to us) . . . We saw Selincourt<sup>2</sup> on Sunday at tea at Allan Bank. (Other tea invitations we have rejected for freedom's sake.) We talked of many things including the Professorship,<sup>3</sup> which I am glad he got, though I have not yet seen his Lecture. The matter of it is sure to be good.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. S. H. Hamer, at that time Secretary to the National Trust.

<sup>2</sup> Ernest de Selincourt, Professor of English Literature at Birmingham University.

<sup>3</sup> The Professorship of Poetry at Oxford.



To Walter Crum

4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.

June 10, 1929

... I am glad to hear you have become a personification of ease, indulgence and affability! and would travel to Italy to see you playing that part.

... I expect you are in despair about the election and indeed it is disappointing when, as it seems to me, Baldwin had lifted politics to an altogether higher level, scorning all scurrilities, personalities and vulgarities, and plainly having no ends of his own to serve—out for nothing but just to keep the country going straight to industrial peace and a new prosperity (that might almost do for a peroration!). . . . I was down with Violet<sup>1</sup> on Friday night and, of course, there was much talk of you. Ozzy really is a gardening genius! To look at that delightful garden now and think of the bare field approached through a mud swamp which it was twenty-five years ago! Did you hear A. E. Housman's response to the toast of his health at Cambridge? "Cambridge has seen many remarkable sights. It has seen Wordsworth drunk. It has seen Porson sober. I am a greater scholar than Wordsworth and a greater poet than Porson. It sees me betwixt and between."

Yours aff.,

J. B.

From Rev. F. G. Ellerton

October 13, 1929

... I am much looking forward to your *Shakespeare*. Heretic though I am I can be moved by him when he is really off into the sky. I happened to open *Antony and C.* yesterday and just read C.'s last speeches—and some earlier ones—and thrilled as usual all down my back. For

<sup>1</sup> Alluding to a visit to Miss Violet Dickinson's house near Welwyn, where she and her brother Oswald (Ozzy) were then living. John and I had met first at their London house.

instance "As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle . . ."—marvellous, marvellous and beyond all marvel! One feels every turn of Cleopatra's nature. I think she is far and away his greatest woman, but shall meekly listen to you belauding Cordelia and Co., who might stand in the *Idylls of the King* but *not* where they are. (Universal booing from the Right of the Chamber). Yes, I look forward to assaulting you with Bolshevik negation over your next work. And now gird up your loins and take up the *magnum opus* which you started at some time ago. I think you objected that you have not enough specialized knowledge of some of the world's literatures to set about comparing their finest things. But I reply that the finest things obviously emerge from the special to the air of the universal. My eye lit just now upon your humble dissent from Jebb's view of *Samson*. No doubt that you are right. Very well then, go ahead, and exhibit and discuss and compare and lay down canons and illustrate them. Drop the clothing of the poet's environment, age, etc., and show the naked beauty of the great things everywhere—or when I say everywhere, I mean take a large range. *Poetry* is what I want, not prose, and, if you're dealing with a poet, *à bas la politique*—and even dramatic structure and so on to a large extent. Let's have the kernel: lots of people can and do enlarge upon the husks. It sounds rather vast and even chaotic, but it would be a real service to get people to look for *poetry*, sheer *poetry*, and learn to recognize it. Much would be obvious and straightforward and a great enjoyment to you. But I don't know whether you see your way to any row of pegs on which to hang your writing. But do think it over.

. . . Now I have actually kept awake and babbled, but must now turn to my evening discourse. How I wish I could sometimes get up and talk about Dante or Milton. How mouths would open and eyes close! You know preaching sometimes is more of a job than trying to translate Catullus! There's a good pagan sentiment for you from a *Rural Dean*!

From Rev. F. G. Ellerton

Tardebigge,  
November 13, 1929

MY DEAR JOHN,

"... having itching ears", says an antient writer. The vanity of you writers is shocking to a Parish Priest employed in preparing Candidates for Confirmation. So you want a little more butter and think to lure me by calling it, with a great modern character, "the best butter". Butter is good in moderation but too much tends to cerebral obesity.

Well, I have been, and am, engaged in the avocations of my Calling. . .

. . . So really J.B. and his books are rather soothing now at 10.0 p.m., though my cerebation is perhaps not equal to dealing faithfully with him. I have read some more of you for the second time and repeat that Falstaff takes the stage too much. But you *have* done Lear very finely and—what I like you most for—Antony. What you say of Macbeth and Lady M. doesn't seem to me so new. Though all of it well said. Your apologia for Prince Hal leaves me cold. I don't like him and you don't make me like him. Very good on Hotspur, who wanted bringing out. I demur to your insisting so much on Autolycus and yet excluding Touchstone. That is a bad omission.

. . . I think what I fall most foul with you over is pp. 115, 116, and Richard II. I don't know what Yeats, nor remember what Masfield, says about Richard. But I don't follow your reasoning. Shylock, Falstaff, Iago, Richard II—why can't the "unsophisticated reader" who, for once, seems to you so valuable a judge, take them all as creations of genius without your talking of Shakespeare's likes or our preferences or worships. Muddling line of argument. *Did* Shakespeare "like" *any* of his characters? I don't think so. Not in your sense. I don't believe he "liked" Prince Hal. Are his judgments implicitly *ethical*? Is he on the side of the angels? You do seem to be suggesting that at times.

. . . However, in the terrifically difficult matter of pro-

portion and emphasis. I do think you are most successful, with the glaring exception of Falstaff and the forensic argumentation about Prince Hal. Anyone would learn from you what is greatest in Shakespeare, and why it is so great, and that is what your book is for.

. . . There now—the best butter, and you know I wouldn't have spread it if I didn't think you deserved it. I quite predict that this will sell and go on selling immensely. I think you will find that it eventually far outdistances *Johnson*. So there.

Now it's much too late—1.0 a.m. Would you sit up till 1.0 a.m. to butter me? Not so.

. . . And do you know Emily Dickinson? Should I?

And what of the *Testament of Beauty*? I don't expect to be captured much.

You must in common decency answer these last two queries.

Yours affectionately ever,  
F.G.E.

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.  
November 21, 1929

MY DEAR FRANK,

You certainly deserve a letter and I must begin one. Of course, I was delighted with yours. It *was* the best butter and the points of the pins with which you pricked were not very sharp: and altogether I thought you a most intelligent as well as affectionate critic! . . . I confess your letter read as that of a man busy and eager and in good health, or of sufficient imprudence, to sit up till 2.0 in the morning studying details in a friend's work and turning the details mostly into sugar! . . . Now first for your questions I was to answer. *Testament of Beauty*. Yes, you must certainly read that: really the most remarkable poem ever written by a man of 86, and remarkable, too, in itself. All that wise old man (the quintessence of Oxford art and

philosophy married to science and giving birth to a poet) believes and thinks about life—poetry, art, science, philosophy, religion, politics—full of wisdom of all sorts. And so full of poetry, too. It is crabbed in places, as you would expect, but he is always escaping to similes and stories of man and nature, and they are as fresh (tho' mostly not to me so perfect in form or clear in inspiration) as his finest lyrics of fifty years ago. I have no doubt at all that he is the poet living to-day whom the to-morrows of two or three centuries hence will still be interested in.

. . . Thank you again very much for such an interesting letter. It wouldn't be human of an author not to enjoy seeing his book taken in such detailed seriousness as you—have taken this, and you know I value your opinion—so it all gives me great pleasure.

*From Rev. F. G. Ellerton*

*Tardebigge  
November 25, 1929*

MY DEAR JOHN,

No. I don't give in at all about Richard II, etc. The fact is that, as Henley said of R.L.S., you have "something of the lesser catechist" about you and are always looking out for moral values. To me it seems purely meaningless to talk about S. not wanting us to prefer Macbeth to Banquo and Macduff. Also I opine that with one part of his being he adored creating Iago, with another Othello. Really, really! you with your "unsophisticated reader" are putting the Bard on the level of transpontine melodrama where the villain is booed, or of those priceless Drury Lane productions where I remember being in tears of helpless laughter at the absurdities of the piece, and being "hushed" at by the pit which was sobbing its unsophisticated real wet tears of happy sentimentality. Am I to boo Iago and Macbeth and Richard III? Then I must also boo Cleopatra, Shylock, and Falstaff. I don't want to boo anyone. Iago comes near to it and still more Iachimo.

But one doesn't *notice* Iago in the upshot and I should say that *all* the characters in the great tragedies dissolve and disappear in the overwhelming impression which the tragedy makes on one's soul. "Like" Othello? Yes, of course. "Pity" Lear? Equally of course. But a lesser man could have drawn Othello, or even Lear. Only Shakespeare can make us thrill and shudder by showing us in their persons aspects of the soul of man in the grip of elemental passions. No! W.S. isn't (to me) a creator of "heroes" and "heroines". In the tragedies has *any* character got *charm*? I should like to know which. Does one "love" any single one of them? I don't. The fact of the matter is that in tragedy, where you are stirring human nature to its depths, if the note of spirituality is silent, as it always is in W.S., the heroes and heroines (and the rest of them) have not got that power of appeal which the characters of lesser men have. "The play's the thing", after all.

. . . However, you will not agree. But who of them all can hold a candle to Antigone? Mind you, I am not belittling W.S.'s tragic power. Quite the contrary. Nor his power of creating character. As a generalization (and therefore only a half truth) in the tragedies the play is the dominating thing and the players pieces on the board: in the comedies the play is naught and the players everything.

. . . But why do I again steal hours from my pillow, especially after having had a Confirmation to-day, and lots of different people from morning to night?

. . . I have been reading Brett on the Iron Duke and love the old boy more than ever.

. . . I will get hold of the *Testament of Beauty*. It is good news that *that* old boy has got his verse to flow clear again. I thought he was at the end of his song. It was a fine thing of Asquith (wasn't it A.?) to make him P.L.

. . . By the way. The one thing which I am most grateful to you for in your *opus* is your drawing of the

"sweet Shakespeare" side of the Bard. All you say on that head is valuable and rather revealing to me. You do succeed in making him a clearer figure to me. I almost see him. But too much Falstaff—much too much. Yes, I saw how you dragged England<sup>1</sup> in by the ears whenever you happened to remember her. Hence perhaps (partly) your obsession about Prince Hal.

Love to Ruth and tell her I thought her review seemed quite good. Delighted that she, too, like her papa, frowns at the "highbrow" and apparently prefers the "unsophisticated man". "I know what I like," says the U.M. "I wish you didn't," is the inevitable reply. For then there might be a chance for the poor fellow.

I am glad you give in about W.S. on Music. Anyway, I shall try and read some more of him this winter.

Love also to Sarah and Jane.

Now to bed.

*To Rev. F. G. Ellerton*

*December 7, 1929*

... And now a word about yourself. I am so glad you feel able to think of staying on, and am sure Parish and Deanery and Diocese will rejoice.

... You must now look back happily on the exceptional affection you won from the Ellesmere folk; and are evidently now winning from your parishoners—especially the children, I expect—and neighbours at Tardebigge.

Now a sentence or two about Shakespeare. You wildly misunderstand what I write: even about Shylock: and more about Richard II and Henry V. I only went into the matter because Yeats, etc., said that W.S. greatly preferred Richard II to Henry V. My answer is that if he had he would have made us do so. They argue that because Richard II is a more interesting and poetic creation therefore Shakespeare preferred that kind of man. You might as well say Dickens preferred such a

<sup>1</sup> The book belonged to the *English Heritage* series.

man as Micawber to such a man as old Cheeryble. No doubt, as you say, Shakespeare "adored creating Iago" (I should not use the word "adored"), but that does not mean that he either liked Iago or meant us to like him . . . I rather doubt your theory that the characters matter more in the comedies. One would be more interested to meet Brutus or Hamlet or Cordelia or Desdemona or Juliet or even Cleopatra than anybody in the comedies except Falstaff. There, that will set you off again.

Yours affec.,  
JOHN C. B.

*To his daughter Jane*

*Wramplingham Hall,  
Wymondham, Norfolk  
December 16, 1929  
(4.15 p.m.)*

MY DEAREST JENNY,

You will feel it <sup>1</sup> *dreadfully* I know, such a passionately loyal Churchwoman as you have always been. I am very unhappy about it myself and feel for so many people who will be sad, and most, I think, for you, because you are you: and for the dear old Archbishop to whom it must almost be a deathblow. Yet he is so brave and so wise that I feel sure he won't let his disappointment lead him into making any rash pronouncement about it. It can't but have very bad results of all sorts, I fear. The worst will be utter lawlessness; and the Bishops—as York perhaps unwisely said—deprived of all *spiritual* authority against whatever practices the new Prayer Book would not have allowed. And it is horrible to think that the Prayer Book will probably be an issue at the next General Election, with the worst possible results of every kind. I have not read the debate yet, but it was evidently very badly managed, and I suppose "the Protestant underworld" had spent no end of money in frightening electors

<sup>1</sup> The rejection of the Revised Prayer Book by the House of Commons.



with all sorts of bogeys and getting them to frighten their M.P.'s. And probably our people thought it was safe in the Commons as we were universally told . . . But perhaps we may hope that the Commons are already ashamed of themselves and that if the Book could be carried thro' the Assembly again—with the King's prayers and the dear Black Rubric—all may go well.

*From the Diary*

January 14. Dined at the Literary Society. de la Mare and I discussed the reading of verse, on which I am glad to find he heartily shares my views as to the slight pause at the end of the line, and of course on the iniquity of accenting the syllables according to the pattern of the metre instead of according to the proper pronunciation of the words, thus destroying all the counterpoint between metre and accent which makes the variety of the verse. We also talked of Hardy, whom he knew, and would not allow to be a pessimist, arguing that poems so fine as his give pure joy and therefore cannot be pessimistic. I maintained that poems, even if finer than his always are, in which, to use my phrase, nobody ever catches any trains except those which are just going to run off the line, do have a pessimistic outlook and effect. I boldly added that Shakespeare would be a pessimist if he had written nothing but *Lear*—or with fifty *Lears* and no *Much Ados* or *Twelfth Nights*. I am not really sure of this, for the grandeur of *Lear* (like that of *The Dynasts*) rises above all possibilities of pessimism. But I do think, and half got de la M. to agree, that Hardy's picture of life contains far more failures, unhappy accidents, perversities of fate, than are to be discovered in ordinary experience of life. He also said—and this was very characteristic of de la M.—when you walked with Hardy the people you met in the streets seemed not to be actual bodily passers-by but people in his novels.

Crewe and I talked of French politics. He told me

one good story. When Louis Philippe slipped away in a cab in 1848, having no appetite for risking a scaffold, some wit said, "*Fils de Saint Louis, montez en fiacre!*"

March 19. Dined Hitchens's. I had an interesting talk with Herbert Lawrence<sup>1</sup> after dinner about Foch, who was dying. He spoke of how generous Foch had always been in his praise of the English in the War, and said he remembered Foch coming into the railway carriage where he (Herbert L.) was with Haig at the time of the signing of the Armistice, and saying as he shook hands with Haig, "I owe all this to you." Lawrence does not think Foch one of the greatest soldiers of the world . . . but thinks him one of the very finest men who ever lived. He considers the greatest man in the war was Clémenceau.

May 28. The Club: a very good evening. I wish I could remember one in a hundred of the good things said and interesting stories told. But they float away even before one gets to bed, though some come back again when something is said or done which links itself on to them and wakes them out of their sleep. One thing Grey said about Foch I remember. It was that in 1918 he said, "We have three armies in France: the American, which wishes to fight but can't; the French, which could fight but won't" (it was then rather mutinous); "and the English, which can and does!" . . . I told them of the English sailors who asked to join in an American procession which carried banners inscribed "We won the War!" and arrived with a banner of their own on which they had put "We helped!"—a piece of humour, we agreed, entirely English, which no Frenchman, Italian or even German could even begin to understand. Another remark of Grey's, which I remember, was his quoting a most characteristic performance of Balfour's, who, when speaking, I think, at a luncheon, or at least talking in a large company, said casually, "When I was Prime

<sup>1</sup> General Hon. Sir Herbert Lawrence, G.C.B.

Minister, or *something of that sort!*" Conceive Mr. G. speaking of that august office in that casual fashion! It was all very pleasant, but all the rest has gone the way of forgetfulness, except a characteristic remark of Kipling's when he came in (Grey had not arrived): Kenyon said to him, "I don't suppose we shall get many politicians to-night." "Well," said Kipling, "mayn't we say 'our state is the more gracious!'"

*From the Diary*

January 6. Dined Literary. Talked nearly all the evening to Crewe, whom I always like. He said Rosebery had told him the only two people in all his life in whose company he had felt nervous were Bismarck and Queen Victoria.

February 6. I am strangely loaded with flattery about the Shakespeare book which I wrote with such difficulty and despair—no book I have written has been so much praised. I *now* like it fairly well myself, and I rather wonder that I thought it such a complete failure as I did. But it is certainly a very inferior book to the *Milton*.

February 18. I am just off to Birmingham to lecture on "Tennyson and the Victorians" to the English Association there, but I note before going that Lavinia Talbot sends me this morning a letter to her from A.J.B. saying, "... I have read through and greatly profited by John Bailey's charming volume. Please give him the warm thanks of a grateful reader." Such phrases, of course, in themselves mean little or nothing, but Mr. Sidgwick reports that he has read it with his own eyes, though he has most things read to him—and he would hardly have written as he does unless he liked it.

March 30. Lunched with Lady Vera Herbert, where were Sir Esmé<sup>1</sup> and Lady Isabella Howard, Lord and Lady Ernle, and Lady Burghclere. I was glad to hear from Lady Isabella that she had put down her foot quite

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord Howard of Penrith.

firmly against any of the Hearst Press people, in the Embassy at Washington. She spoke of the wonderful administrative achievements of Mussolini: land that was bog or desert now growing wheat; total disappearance of beggars from Naples, etc. Rex Leeper, who lunched here yesterday, told me that his brother Allen sat next Lord Thomson at a public dinner lately, and after saying something about a Socialist Ministry apologised, fearing that Lord T. might think the remark a rude one. "Not at all," said Lord T., "it is not a bit rude, except that it isn't true. There isn't one Socialist in the Cabinet, and very few in the Party!" (How *furious* the I.L.P. people would be!)

May 10. I have just been to Chequers, for the meeting of the Chequers Trustees. We were—besides Macdonald himself—The Speaker, Lord Lee, Noel Buxton, Lansbury, Maclagan and self. The P.M. took a very active and observant interest in the state of the walls, and seemed to care a great deal about the trees, many of which are dead or dying, and wished for replanting, in the interest of the P.M. of a hundred years hence. We saw a few of the treasures, especially Elizabeth's ring, with her portrait and that of Anne Boleyn. Lord Lee said it had been given by James I to Lord Home, or Hume—and sold by the present or late Lord to him.

There are also fine chalices, all—especially one very fine Spanish one—marked as fifteenth century, which made Maclagan point out that they could not be earlier than seventeenth.

... The P.M. talked of the Laureateship, to which he has just appointed Masfield, practically inviting opinions from Maclagan and me. I know Maclagan considered it ought to have been offered to Yeats, whom, as he told me going down, he thought much our greatest living poet. He did not, however, say this to the P.M. But the P.M. said some Irishman, an artist who has got a picture in the Academy in which Yeats is introduced—one Keeling, I

think—had said Yeats ought to be Laureate, to which P.M. had replied, "The Laureateship is a United Kingdom affair"—his very words—"you can't have Yeats for Laureate unless you bring back Southern Ireland into the United Kingdom." That the Irishman thought too high a price to pay! I said I thought the finest poem of the laureate kind written by any living poet was Binyon's "For the Fallen".

I said Masfield will be popular with two opposite sets of people, those who liked the *Everlasting Mercy*, and *Dauber*, and those who liked *Reynard the Fox*. I liked both. The P.M. said he had received copies of the works of nearly every poet in the kingdom, but had thrown all away except [Alfred] Noyes.

The Speaker brought me back in his car; he was very pleasant, and we had a good deal of agreeable political talk of the sort I so much enjoy.

December 23. Read passage from *Sartor Resartus*, the first of my twelve quarter of an hour Broadcast readings.

To Walter Crum

Wramplingham Hall,  
Wymondham,  
Norfolk  
April 5, 1930

. . . You are very wise not to have wireless. I did not want to but my family desired it: and they listen but I never do—I don't hear well enough for one thing. All these new inventions are time wasters for people like you and me on the whole: tho' I *have* heard interesting speeches and good music on the wireless. But of course small cars—such a curse on the road by their numbers, and the motor-bus by its size—are immense boons to many small people; and the wireless—as conducted by the excellent B.B.C.—*does* bring—snippets, perhaps, but honest and genuine snippets—of "culture" into thou-

sands of families into which nothing of the kind would otherwise penetrate. The worst of all these things is (as I told my hearers last Monday when talking about Gibbon) that these things break up our lives into one thing after another, snippets and snatches of everything no solid knowledge of anything. Really *The Listener*, though, their weekly paper, is full of good things. I never read it before. Buy it some day when you are on a journey. Last week's contains part of my "Gibbon."

. . . I gather that in U.S.A. wireless is run by private companies and controlled by advertisers, so that you stop in the middle of a lecture on M. Angelo or a Symphony of Beethoven to be informed that Brown's boots are cheaper and last longer than anybody else's! Isn't it a nightmare to think of the things people tolerate and even accept?

To Rev. F. G. Ellerton

4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.  
April 23, 1930

MY DEAR FRANK,

Well, in spite of the Budget we are rash enough to be starting to-morrow for a Dutch excursion. We go to Hôtel des Deux Villes, the Hague, and shall probably stay there a week, when J. (who goes to Oberammergau in May) and R. (who has lately been a fortnight at Portofino) return home, and S. and I remain on there or elsewhere for a few more days. You are, I suppose at Torquay.<sup>1</sup> If so, tell Margaret her reputation (except as a *fruchtbare Frau*: do you remember that story?) is at the lowest possible ebb. The girls say they have written and written and received no reply. I fear she is becoming "illiterate" in all senses of that word. I am not sure she will either deserve or be fit for the company of this intellectual family if she comes to London (as she said) in May.

Well, I have done "talking", and taken my wages!

<sup>1</sup> Where Mr. Ellerton was staying with his daughter Margaret—Mrs. Paul Gibson.

Yes, you were right about my occasionally dropping my voice but I believe I corrected that. I have not heard much about what the listeners, if there were many, thought. I had two enthusiastic puffs from Fellows of the Royal Society—no less!—but they are hardly representative of the British public: and I don't feel sure the B.B.C. authorities cared much for them. They printed "Gibbon" and "Fox," the two most popular ones, in *The Listener*, which, by the way, is really an excellent paper, and by no means "popular" in the bad sense. I had a "bouquet" from an unknown Kensington lady who said she was going abroad and the two things she regretted were my talks and the English primroses and daffodils! So you see I am a sort of incarnation of "the flowers of the spring".

I went to N. Gallery yesterday and thought one really need not go abroad for Dutch pictures. Nearly twenty Rembrandts—several tip-top—and what Cuypts, and Ruysdaels, Hobbemas and De Hoogh, etc.! And *what* a Seghers! I see they now call that beautiful landscape "School of" Rembrandt (which my dear little Rachel said she would like to take home more than any picture in the room) which was then called Rembrandt and afterwards Ostade (this is a very awkward sentence: not fit for *Lit. Sup.* or for F.G.E.'s eye!).

To Samuel Looker

4, Onslow Gardens, S.W.

May 9, 1930

MY DEAR LOOKER,

I am home and have read your Crabbe with great pleasure. You know how entirely I agree with you in your general view of him and in the high place you give him. I think you a *little* overstate his sadness and sternness, and understate his comedy, of which you say little. Much of it seems to me to be excellent: a minor Jane Austen in verse. (J.A. said she could have married him!) And my memories seem to give more of



spring and more of calm as opposed to stormy seas, than you allow—tho' of course you and Byron are right in emphasizing his general leaning to the sterner aspects of nature and man and life.

... I hear to-day that poor Mrs. Williams<sup>1</sup> is not likely to live very long. There were some fine tributes paid to A.W. in the Swindon paper. He was one of the finest men I have known ...

P.S. I always feel that the plain hedges and fields of Norfolk and the rest are full of Cowper and Crabbe and Crome. I hear their voices in every lane—do you remember—"unnumbered cottages and farms Which have for musing minds unnumbered charms."

To Walter Crum

*Friendly Green,*<sup>2</sup>  
Cowden, Eden Bridge  
Kent

August 1, 1930

... We must meet in the autumn, and if Snowden's robberies and the diminished dividends from which he robs allow us to afford luncheon, we will have one together.

We have been here since June 11, but till my operation I was too often in London and have done little reading. How I sympathize with what you say about the shame of an Englishman to find himself represented abroad by the *Paris D.M.*—the vilest rag ever printed, to judge by the few specimens I have seen! And as you say the *Temps* (and *Débats*) has excellent articles. I was amused at what you said of *La Belle Hélène*. Soon no one will recognize an allusion to classical story any more than (I am told) they now do a Biblical allusion at a public meeting. But I lectured (by request) on *the Bible* to the teachers—and I am bound to admit I have never

<sup>1</sup> Widow of Alfred Williams, the Wiltshire poet.

<sup>2</sup> A house in Kent which we had taken for that summer.

1930]

"WE GROW OLD"

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had a lecture received with such "applause". So I hope the elementary children *do* still hear the Bible!

I have lately (an old man's job!) been revising *Johnson* and *Milton* and *Shakespeare* for reprints!

How are you? I hope in vigorous form. But we grow old!

Yours affec.

JOHN C. B.

1931

*From the Diary*

January 27. Dined at The Club, a full and very pleasant evening. Murray told me that Balfour had said the true word of Rosebery, "he was a pilot who wouldn't go out in rough weather!" Had most talk with Austen Chamberlain, who was opposite me: all the old politicians, his father, Gladstone, etc. He said of A.J.B. that if he agreed with you it was seldom for the reasons you gave: he loved fine points and always confessed and boasted that he could never guess or understand the arguments that influenced the plain man.

February 17. Dined at The Club—again a very pleasant evening with much laughing and many good stories. Grey told me Clemenceau had said of Wilson, "*Il parle comme Jésus Christ, mais il se conduit comme Lloyd George!*" He spoke of Wilson as never having been able to tolerate a first-rate man about him. He bore with Lansing as long as Lansing would act as a clerk, and with House till his flatterers told him that House was claiming to guide him, and that he was only the Jack that House built!

These are scraps—all that remain, and not the best morsels, of a feast of good talk about the Privy Council as a Court: about Mr. G. and Hartington and politics generally: and with Grey and George Trevelyan about Shelley and Hogg and Peacock, Leigh Hunt, etc.

[*The last entry*]

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